363rd FLYING TRAINING GROUP

LINEAGE
363d Reconnaissance Wing, established, 29 Jul 1947
Organized, 15 Aug 1947
Discontinued, 27 Aug 1948
Redesignated 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, and activated, 27 Aug 1948
Inactivated, 26 Apr 1949
Activated, 1 Sep 1950
Redesignated 363 Tactical Fighter Wing on 1 Oct 1981
Redesignated 363 Fighter Wing on 1 Oct 1991
Inactivated on 31 Dec 1993
Redesignated 363 Air Expeditionary Wing and converted to provisional status on 19 Nov 1998
Activated on 1 Dec 1998
Inactivated on 25 Aug 2003
Withdrawn as provisional unit on 24 May 2007
Redesignated 363 Flying Training Group on 25 May 2007
Activated on 1 Jun 2007

STATIONS
Langley Field (later, AFB), VA, 15 Aug 1947-27 Aug 1948
Langley AFB, VA, 27 Aug 1948-26 Apr 1949
Langley AFB, VA, 1 Sep 1950-12 Mar 1951
Shaw AFB, SC, 2 Apr 1951-31 Dec 1993
Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia, 1 Dec 1998-25 Aug 2003
Al Dhafra, United Arab Emirates, 1 Jun 2007

DEPLOYED STATIONS
Langley AFB, VA, 1 Jun-1 Oct 1959
MacDill AFB, FL, 21 Oct-30 Nov 1962

ASSIGNMENTS
Ninth Air Force, 15 Aug 1947-27 Aug 1948
Ninth Air Force, 27 Aug 1948-26 Apr 1949
Tactical Air Command, 1 Sep 1950
Ninth Air Force, 2 Apr 1951
Tactical Air Division Provisional, 25 Apr 1951

Ninth Air Force, 11 Oct 1951
837th Air Division, 8 Feb 1958
USAF Tactical Air Reconnaissance Center, 1 Feb 1963
Ninth Air Force, 15 Jul 1963
833rd Air Division, 1 Oct 1964
Ninth Air Force, 24 Dec 1969
833 Air Division, 1 Oct 1964
Ninth Air Force, 24 Dec 1969-31 Dec 1993
9 Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Southern Watch (later, 9 Aerospace Expeditionary Task Force-Southern Watch; 9 Aerospace Expeditionary Task Force), 1 Dec 1998-25 Aug 2003
Ninth Air Force, 1 Jun 2007

ATTACHMENTS
First Air Force, 15 Jan-1 Feb 1949
Twenty-Ninth Air Force [Tactical] [Provisional], 31 Oct-10 Dec 1955

WEAPON SYSTEMS
FP (later, RF)-80
FA (later, RB)-26, 1947-1948
RF-80
RB-26, 1948-1949
F-6, 1948
H-5, 1949
L-5, 1949
B-26, 1950-1951, 1951-1952
B-45, 1950-1951
RB-26, 1951, 1951-1957
RF-80, 1951, 1951-1955
B-25, 1952-1954
RB-45, 1954
RB-57, 1954-1956
RF-84, 1954-1958
RT-33, 1955-1956
WT-33, 1955-1956
RB-66, 1956-1969
WB-66, 1957-1964, 1968-1969
RF-101, 1957-1958, 1959-1971
RF-4, 1965
EB-66, 1966-1974
RB-26, 1950-1951
F-84, 1951
L-13, 1951-1954
L-20, 1951-1954
T-33, 1951-1955
TB-25, 1956-1958

TF-101, 1966-1969
B-57, 1971-1976
B-57, 1966-1976
F-16, 1982-1993
OA-10, 1992-1993
E-3, 1998-2003
KC-10, 1998-2003
F-15, 1998-2003
F-16, 1998-2003
C-21, 1998-2003
C-130, 1998-2001
KC-135, 1998-2003
RC-135, 1998-2003
U-2, 1998-2003
UH-60, 1998-2003
E-6, 2001-2003

COMMANDERS
Col Robert W. C. Wimsatt, 15 Aug 1947-27 Aug 1948
Col Robert W. C. Wimsatt, 27 Aug 1948-26 Apr 1949
Col Willis F. Chapman, 1 Sep 1950
LTC Harvey J. Watkins, 12 Mar 1951
LTC Victor N. Cabas, 13 Mar 1951
Col John R. Dyas, c. 2 Apr-24 Apr 1951
None (not manned), 25 Apr-10 Oct 1951
Col John R. Dyas, 11 Oct 1951
Col Richard A. Knobloch, 14 Jul 1954
Col Gene H. Tibbets, 17 Jul 1954
BG Stephen B. Mack, 4 Jun 1955
Col Derwood K. Smith, 8 Feb 1958
Col Thomas D. Brown, 25 Aug 1958
BG Thomas R. Ford, 5 Jun 1959
Col John D. Bridges, 21 Jul 1959
Col Franklin A. Nichols, 15 Jun 1961
Col Arthur A. McCartan, 1 Sep 1961
Col Arthur D. Thomas, 19 Aug 1963
Col Victor N. Cabas, 25 Jun 1965
Col Leslie J. West-burg, 5 Aug 1967
Col Allan T. Sampson, 23 Jun 1968
BG Kendell S. Young, 15 Jul 1968
Col Erwin A. Hesse, 14 Jun 1969
Col Richard B. Collins, 16 May 1970
Col Philip V. Howell, Jr., 10 Jun 1971
Col Mark A. Welsh, Jr., 26 Jun 1972
Col William J. Bally, Jr., 25 Oct 1972
Col Rolland G. Hull, 2 Aug 1974

Col Albert G. Rogers, 28 Mar 1976
Col Paul A. Henkel, 12 Aug 1977
Col Cecil W. Powell, 23 Jan 1980
Col Richard E. Carr, 15 Jan 1982
Col Bruce J. Lotzbire, 18 Jun 1984
Col Russell M. Lanning, 6 Jun 1986
Col Jay C. Callaway Jr., 24 Nov 1986
Col Ralph E. Eberhart, 19 Sep 1988
Col Raymond P. Huot, 16 Oct 1990
Brig Gen John B. Hall Jr., 20 Apr 1992-31 Dec 1993
Brig Gen Dennis R. Larson, 1 Dec 1998
Brig Gen Charles N. Simpson, 30 Jun 1999
Brig Gen Allen G. Peck, 2 Jul 2000
Brig Gen Gilmary H. Hostage III, 1 Aug 2001
Brig Gen Dale Waters, 15 Jul 2002-unkn

HONORS
Service Streamers
None

Campaign Streamers
Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device
1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001
1 Jun 2001-31 May 2002
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2003

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
23 Oct-24 Nov 1962
10-15 Feb 1973
1 Jul 1974-1 Jul 1976
2 Jul 1976-30 Jun 1978
1 Oct 1981-1 Jun 1983
1 Jan 1988-30 Dec 1989
1 Jan 1992-31 Dec 1993
1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

Bestowed Honors
Authorized to display honors earned by the 363 Reconnaissance Group prior to 15 Aug 1947

Service Streamers
None

Campaign Streamers
World War II
Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations
Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army
1 Oct-17 Dec 1944
18 Dec 1944-15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM
A shield quarterly, first quarter checky, Argent and Gules; second and third quarters Azure; fourth quarter of the second charged with a lion rampant Or, detailed Gold Brown, armed and langed of the third; all within a diminished bordure of the fourth.

A shield quarterly, first quarter cheeky, argent and gules; second and third quarters, azure; fourth quarter gules, a lion rampant or, armed and langued azure, all within a diminutive of the bordure or. Wreath of the colors, argent and gules. Approved on 16 Jun 1952, scroll modified on 19 May 2010.

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE
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. The term checky, like a checkerboard, is symbolic of military organization as units of soldiers upon a field of battle. The blue quarters are for valor and courage, qualities strongly manifested by the 363d Tactical Reconnaissance Group during World War II and also present today in the Group and its assigned units. The fourth quarter with the lion rampant upon a red field is emblematic of the Group's courageous and victorious participation in the Battle of the Bulge and for the citation and award of the Belgian Fourragère by the Government of Belgium.

The red and white checkerboard memorializes a distinctive marking once used by the unit. It also symbolizes military organizations as units of soldiers on a field of battle. The blue quadrants

symbolize valor and courage. The lion rampant on a red field recalls the unit's participation in the Battle of the Bulge and the citation and award of the Belgian Fourragere it received for that action.

MOTTO
VOIR C'EST SAVOIR—To see is to know.

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS
Provided day and night visual and photographic reconnaissance, 1947-1948 and again, 1948-1949. Besides performing tactical electronic and photographic reconnaissance, Sep.l950-Apr 1951, controlled light bombardment and provided B-26 crew replacement training. Wing headquarters was not operational, 25 Apr-10 Oct 1951. (During this period, all headquarters personnel were integrated into the Tactical Air Division Provisional, which directly controlled all wing components.) Regained wing integrity on 11 Oct 1951. Provided tactical reconnaissance from Oct 1951, also provided electronic reconnaissance, Nov 1953-Feb 1974, and weather reconnaissance, Nov 1953-Dec 1964. Provided combat crew training for reconnaissance crews, Oct 1951-Dec 1954 and Apr 1956-Apr 1959. Deployed aircraft and crews in small detachments, or as part of composite squadrons to support overseas reconnaissance needs. Deployed at Langley AFB, Va, 1 Jun-1 Oct 1959, and at MacDill AFB, Fla, 21 Oct-30 Nov 1962. From MacDill, played a major reconnaissance role during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award presented personally by President John F. Kennedy. Performed a major reconnaissance role during the Dominican Republic crisis of 1965-1966. Supported U.S. operations in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and early 1970s by deploying numerous detachments and transferring several highly trained squadrons to that area. Provided replacement training of tactical reconnaissance and tactical electronic warfare crews, and combat crew training, beginning Jan 1966. Flew many test projects for the Tactical Air Reconnaissance Center, 1966-1967 and 1970-1971. Deployed a detachment of EB-66s to the Far East during the Pueblo crisis of 1968. Also rotated EB-66 crews to Southeast Asia, 1972-1973. The wing, during all of these operations, also participated in numerous tactical exercises and operations, worldwide.

Day and night photographic and visual reconnaissance, 1947-1949. In addition to tactical electronic and photographic reconnaissance, Sep 1950-Apr 1951, controlled light bombardment and provided replacement training for B-26 crew members. Wing headquarters not operational, 25 Apr-10 Oct 1951. During this period all members of the headquarters were integrated into the Tactical Air Division Provisional, and wing components were attached to the division for control. Regained wing integrity on 11 Oct 1951. In addition to tactical reconnaissance, Oct 1951-1989, provided electronic and weather reconnaissance from Nov 1953-Mar 1974, dropping the weather mission in Dec 1964. Provided combat crew training for reconnaissance aircrews, Oct 1951-Dec 1954 and Apr 1956-Apr 1959. Deployed aircraft and aircrews in small detachments, or as part of composite squadrons, to support reconnaissance requirements in overseas areas. Played an important reconnaissance role during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, earning an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) as a result, the decoration being personally presented by President John F. Kennedy. Played a major reconnaissance role during the Dominican Republic Crisis of 1965-1966. Supported operations in Southeast Asia in the 1960s and early 1970s by

deploying numerous detachments and transferring several highly trained squadrons to that area. Also provided replacement training of tactical reconnaissance and electronics warfare crews, and combat crew training, Jan 1966-1974. Flew numerous test projects for the Tactical Air Reconnaissance Center, 1966-1967 and again in 1970-1971. Deployed a detachment of EB-66s to the Far East during the Pueblo crisis of 1968. In Mar 1974, the wing ceased training and employing electronic warfare forces, but it continued to train for and perform tactical reconnaissance missions, including aerial photography for various federal agencies. While continuing to operate Shaw AFB, in 1982 the wing began to train for and perform fighter missions in addition to tactical reconnaissance, becoming the Tactical Air Command's only wing with such a dual role. In 1989, the wing gave up its reconnaissance responsibilities but continued to train for fighter missions. Between Aug 1990 and Mar 1991, the wing deployed most of its aircraft and personnel to southwestern Asia, where they participated in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In December 1992, a member of one of the wing's squadrons (33 FS) earned the first aerial victory credit ever scored by an F-16 pilot. The wing inactivated at the end of 1993. Conducted combat operations in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom, 1998-2003.

363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing
363rd Tactical Fighter Wing
Shaw AFB, South Carolina, had been the hub of reconnaissance activity within Tactical Air Command for many years. The assigned 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing was equipped with RF-101 Voodoos and RB-66 Destroyers when the first RF-4C was first assigned to the 16th TRS in June 1965. The squadron later deployed to Southeast Asia as part of the 460th TRW. The training component, the 4415th CCTS, activated on 1 February 1967 with further RF-4Cs. In July 1968, tail codes were assigned to all components within the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing in the 'J' range. The 4415th CCTS applied 'JL' (white) as a tail code before being redesignated as the 33rd TRTS on 15 October 1969. The former RF-101 Voodoo-equipped 18th TRS received the RF-4C in late 1970, applying the 'JP' (blue) tail code. The 16th TRS returned to the wing from Southeast Asia on 15 February 1971, with 'JM' tail coded (blue/white) RF-4Cs. The 22nd TRS was assigned with the RF-4C and the B-57E on 15 July 1971, before being replaced by the 62nd TRS on 15 October 1971.

Under the wing common tail code concept in 1972, the 16th TRS, 18th TRS, 62nd TRS and 33rd TRTS, adopted the 'JO' tail code. The 18th TRS and 33rd TRTS inactivated on 30 September 1979 and 1 October 1982. The wing redesignated to 363rd TFW on 1 October 1981. The 62nd TRS was reassigned to the 67th TRW on 1 July 1982. The only remaining RF-4C unit, the 16th TRS, receded to 'SW' as the wing common tail code changed officially to this on 1 October 1982, although RF-4Cs were noted with the 'JO' tail codes as late as 2 February 1983. The first four 'SW' coded F-16As arrived for wing maintenance training on 26 March 1982, in the company of a single 'SW' tail coded RF-4C, with bulk deliveries beginning in June 1982. The last RF-4C left Shaw AFB on 16 December 1989.

He announced the changes at a massed meeting and urged hardship cases to prepare their arguments thoroughly before requesting to remain at Barksdale. The colonel then bid farewell to all hands, unequivocally declaring that the 47th Wing was "the best organization he had ever served with." Sufficient time was still found to dispatch six B-45s to Brookley AFB, Alabama, to

participate in Air Indoctrination Course II, where another round of cannibalization ensued to keep them aloft. Meanwhile, preparations were underway at an already crowded Langley to receive their new guests. The 363rd Group historian cryptically commented on one obvious problem. "If B-45's descend upon us, the ceilings of the hangars we have are much too low to accommodate the high tail of the B-45," he wrote. "Solution to that should be interesting."

The Tornado's debut at Langley augured ill for, as the 363rd Group historian predicted, they proved too large for facilities assigned to them. "When the B-45s arrived at Langley and were towed to their designated hangars for maintenance, behold! We had more of the B-45 vertically than we had of the hangar," he wrote. "It was patently impossible to raise the hanger roof, so we did the best thing and cut holes in the ceiling to accommodate the tall B-45 tails," Even more challenging was towing the hulking jets in and out past low hangar doors for maintenance, an act requiring dexterity that Houdini himself might envy. The solution hit upon was practical, but also dangerous: a dolly would raise the nose of the plane several feet off the ground, while simultaneously lowering the tail, whereupon the bomber was gently nudged inwards. It nonetheless took eight to ten men over an hour to safely berth a Tornado, lest, it was noted, "one slip, bingo! A B-45 with only pan of a tail." Furthermore, the Base Supply proved unequal to the task of procuring sufficient spare parts to keep the jets operational. "You can't supply that which doesn't exist," the historian bemoaned. "It was necessary to cannibalize B-45s flown to Langley in order to find parts needed to ferry in B-45s AOCP-grounded at Barksdale." More headaches arose when an entire series of J47 engines were found with defective 12th-stage compressor seals. All 23 B-45s present were grounded pending new engine replacements, possession of which had already been prioritized by Langley's F-86 squadrons. By now such travails had become routine for Colonel Chapman, who focused more upon smoothly integrating his old outfit into the new one. "October left but one problem and that was all important," he cheerily declared, "the welding of these diverse elements into a unit which for spirit, discipline and accomplishment could be nowhere paralleled."

Chapman's optimism proved misplaced, unfortunately, for B-45 operations reached their nadir shortly afterwards. Taking a leaf from Murphy's Law, everything that could go wrong at Langley did so with a seeming vengeance. An onslaught of mechanical difficulties, coupled with strict economy measures, hampered the ability of the 363rd Group to get jets aloft. Consequently, the unit historian lamented how "November brought falling temperatures, falling leaves, and a definite fall in flying time to the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group." Previous difficulties due to part shortages were further aggravated by faulty fuel regulators and starter generators, which again grounded the entire fleet, now risen to 42 machines. Nor had any progress been made in devising better methods of getting B-45s in and out of hangars designed for fighter craft. "Three separate jacking operations raise the nose gear nearly a meter onto a mobile dolly; in this position the aircraft is extremely unstable and the tail skid is depressed approximately six inches," the historian recorded. "The damage which could result from a fall from this height is hard to imagine." The unit also struggled with a growing lack of ramp space, whereupon the increasing numbers of B-45s were arrayed in staggered lines, with new aircraft sandwiched between them. Consequently, if a jet in the rear-most row was to taxi to the run-way, the two aircraft in front had to be towed out of its way first.

On the brighter side, the six B-45s previously detached to Eglin AFB for Air Indoctrination Course II returned with glowing reviews from Major General Willard R. Wolfinbarger, who wrote, "The pilots, even through initially hampered by the lack of formation experience in the B-45, demonstrated exceptional ability in adapting themselves to the proper formation technique applicable to this aircraft. Their devotion to duty is commendable." Chapman, meanwhile, grappled with even bigger priorities on hand. He had been ordered to hone flight crew proficiencies with 1,296 radar bombing sorties and the dropping of 10,044 bombs annually. Unfortunately, wing activities were stymied by a continuous lack of suitable bombing ranges. "Without such a range, combat proficiency in bombing cannot be achieved," the unit history reads. "If we are to pioneer radar bombing with the AN/APQ-24 set from the only operational jet bomber the USAF possessed, we must have the necessary elbow room." Nobody realized this better than Chapman himself, and he implored superiors to take immediate action. "Yearly and semi-yearly access to a bombing range provides indoctrination training, but is not a substitute for day-to-day training in attaining and maintaining combat proficiency," he advised.

The 363rd Group weathered a difficult two months at Langley, but flight and ground crews continued laboring energetically to rectify the flurry of technical difficulties. As more Tornados resumed operational status, longer hours could be flown and, in the words of a finally happy unit historian, "B-45s aloft became no longer a subject of wonder and speculation." An influx of new fuel regulators and starter generators cured most of the J47's ills, and engine life, previously computed at seven hours, gradually increased. The historian attributed this success to the overworked ground crews, whose efforts resulted in fourteen aircraft in commission a record for the unit and 188 hours in flight time achieved. This new level of productivity proved no walk in the park, given endemic part shortages, a lack of viable manuals, and maintenance personnel's unfamiliarity with the aircraft. "They are actually pioneering where the manufacturer left off and are constantly unearthing and documenting unsafe conditions that will someday make the B-45 as safe and dependable as the outmoded C-47," a unit historian wistfully wrote.

This seemingly endless workload notwithstanding, crew chiefs and ground crews remained undiminished in their professionalism. Sergeant Terry Little declared, "We were really enthused about the first jet bomber. Most of us were ex B-17 people. Hell, we were fired up it was an honor to work on it, but it was a bugger to maintain. Everybody in the aircraft maintenance business depends on experience generated data this guy had this problem, here's where he finally gets the solution, and that goes on records and goes in papers somewhere and comes out in the manual. There was no such thing on the B-45 or for flying it either. All we picked up were the three or four months' service testing at Edwards. We learned a lot out there, but we were trouble-shooting our own new problems."

The turnaround took time and effort, but by December Colonel Chapman's persistence and methodical approach to troubleshooting began paying dividends. "At year's end the Group found itself comfortably situated at a new location and resolved that the coming year was to mark an era of greater achievement in the operation of multi-jet aircraft," he stated. Many subordinates, undaunted by crashes and debugging problems, shared their commander's unshakable faith in their aircraft and themselves. "There was a lot of excitement," Captain Deakin recalled of the early days at Langley. "I think that B-45 crews had a pretty good bit of confidence in the airplane we had

some bad mishaps, that's true, but in all they were very enthusiastic about making this thing work." Important progress had been made and valuable lessons learned, but Chapman reflected on his past nine months with blunt and professional ambivalence. "It should be understood that various situations which affected operations were not isolated things that temporarily halted normal operations," he informed superiors. "These situations have occurred with such frequency that normal operations have never been possible." More work and greater support was required.

Happily, the new year found the 363rd Group acquiring still more flight time. Two major problems, the lack of pans and a shortage of replacement J47 engines, had finally subsided to the point where regular aircraft maintenance was increasingly possible. Consequently, more Tornados were airborne longer and cross country flying resumed to give flight crews more experience at cruise control and high-speed navigation. Support facilities at Langley nonetheless languished, and bombers were still being jacked up by the nose and backed into undersized hangars, a hazardous and time consuming process. For expediency, many crews preferred working outside in the cold rather than manhandling jet bombers in and out of buildings. Still, "It is believed that prolonged maintenance, particularly in weather extremes, is best performed indoors where personnel are more comfortable and where engines and systems are not exposed to the elements when protective coverings are removed," a unit historian concluded, Work, when carried on indoors, was also complicated by inadequate lighting, described by one irate crewman as "so poor you have to light a match to see if the bulb is lit."

The spring of 1950 marked the one-year anniversary of the Tornado's debut as the nation's first jet bomber. It had been a particularly harrowing experience for the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, but strides had been made in safety, flight worthiness, and in-commission rates per month. By June, both the 84th and 85th squadrons were flying double the number of hours that had been flown the previous February. The percentage of B-45s in commission had also soared to 78 percent, which elicited giddy exuberance from the unit historian. "This happy condition and the ability to maintain this high percentage differed so greatly from the early days of Louisiana that the humorous remark was heard to the effect that 'When we had three B-45s in commission at Barksdale, a legal holiday was declared.'" Accidents during this period remained a major source of concern, but had declined proportionally given the overall number of hours flown. The most serious incident occurred on May 28, 1950, when number 47-032 crashed on landing. Loud noises had been heard in the left wing nacelle when lowering the main gear, which refused to indicate fully locked.. When the aircraft touched down, the unsecured landing gear collapsed, spinning the plane completely around and snapping off both main landing gears. No injuries resulted but the Tornado was unsalvageable. Impact damage was also sustained by number 47-052 when "a large seagull disputed the right-of-way in the traffic pattern during the last few days of March. Although the gull came out second best in the dispute, a great deal of sheet-metal work was required to affect [sic] repairs." Finally, on June 21, 1950, number 47-055 experienced a compressor explosion during an instrument training flight. The aircraft landed safely, after which the faulty unit was removed and shipped to General Electric for disassembly and inspection.46 So, despite a variety of accidents and engine-related malfunctions, operations with the B-45s displayed an overall improvement.

Events at Barksdale and Langley certainly lent credence to the old aviation saw to Never fly the A-model of anything." This rang painfully true with early Tornado bombers but, in fairness to the 47th and 363rd groups, test units operating B-45s also experienced losses. On September 20, 1948, as B-45C number 48-003 attempted to land at Long Beach Municipal Airport, California, it suddenly caught fire in midair. Onboard were Colonel Arthur W. Schmitt, pilot, and three North American Aviation officials who were riding along as observers. NAA mechanic Leo Hunt, working in the cockpit of another B-45C nearby, related what happened next: "I looked across the Long Beach runway as our new B-45C was coming in for a landing. I then saw a flash of fire coming out of the right engine nacelle, and then more flames as the right wing dipped, and it looked like it was heading in my direction. I went out the escape hatch into space as the inspector had used our ladder to check intakes before engine runs. Then it flew over our heads. It bounced across a golf course and then across a busy street into a stand of large trees with a huge explosion of rolling black smoke and flames. Amazingly, the left wing had hit the trees and exploded while the fuselage continued forward and all the crew was safe." Less fortunate was the crew of another C-model, number 48-006, operated by the All Weather Flying Division. The aircraft had just completed a series of touch-and-go landings when the pilot reported an engine fire; then his jet suddenly exploded over Dayton, Ohio, on February 24, 1950. One crewman parachuted to safety but two others died, including the pilot, Royal Air Force Wing Commander Derek S. Pain, a high-ranking exchange officer. This incident highlights the close working association that RAF personnel enjoyed with the Tornado from its earliest days.

One year into its service life, the B-45, like most jet aircraft in the Air Force inventory, remained tenuously employed, with little prospect for expanded operations. Overseas deployment was also deemed impractical but, within months, unforeseen events in Asia dramatically altered that conclusion. For the time being, just keeping the 363rd Group's Tornados airborne proved challenging enough. Lives and planes had been sacrificed, yet the Air Force was coping with, its temperamental new bombers, in spite of seemingly endless difficulties. In fact, it was during the aircraft's tenure at Langley that many gremlins, once deemed insurmountable, were finally exorcized. One perceptive group historian, buoyed by their progress, concluded, "A great deal of experimental work remains to be done before promulgation of tactical jet bombardment doctrine.... [Yet] work in this field opens up a vast new area for exploration in military aviation." Equally sanguine, if more effusive for his youthful audience's sake, was writer Joseph Stocker's assessment following his fleeting tryst with a B-45: "Here, I realized, is the beginning of what will someday be America's all-jet bomber force. And these men who fly the Tornado are the pioneers as truly pioneers as the Wright brothers, and Bleriot and Billy Mitchell."To Willis F. Chapman and his Spartan band, truer words were seldom uttered.

Pilots and ground personnel from the 323rd Reconnaissance Squadron, 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, were already at Langley AFB undergoing training on the B-45 MTU, they were months away from being qualified.4 By default, it fell upon the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Tactical Air Command, to provide pilots with any B-45 proficiency despite their own unfamiliarity with reconnaissance. It was decided that volunteers culled from the 84th and 85th Bombardment squadrons at Langley would deploy back to Barksdale for a 30-day crash course in photographic techniques. This mixing of TAC crews with SAC or ConAC

machines may have ruffled feathers in certain quarters, but it proved the only practical expedient for getting Tornados in theater as quickly as possible. This new, top-secret unit received the official designation of Detachment 4149A, 84th Bombardment Squadron more simply known as Detachment A.

The 84th and 85th Bombardment squadrons, meanwhile, were transferred back to their parent unit, while a greatly reduced 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group was shunted over to Shaw AFB, South Carolina. A federalized Air National Guard unit, the 115th Bomb Squadron, was attached to the Bomb Wing, bringing it up to full strength. Over the next three months prospects brightened further as greater emphasis on securing spare parts resulted in expanded operations. The biggest changeover from this period was when the 85th Bomb Squadron finally phased out the last of its B-26 Invaders, accepted delivery of fifteen B-45s, and resumed all-jet operations. The unit historian quickly noted how morale throughout the 47th Bomb Wing giddily rebounded, undoubtedly "due to the welcome change to an all-jet, all-bomber unit, rather than the previous combination of jet bomber squadron, conventional bomber squadron, reconnaissance squadron and reconnaissance tech squadron, which had been the case under the 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Group organization."

After restrictions on B-45As were lifted in March, wing hours flown again rose, to 1,469, despite the fact that three RB-45Cs were deployed to Korea and others remained at San Bernardino awaiting turrets. Six additional B-45As were deposited at Norton AFB in anticipation of being replaced by the eagerly expected RB-47s. On April 25, 1953, the Tornados became increasingly irrelevant to wing operations once the first Stratojets began arriving at Lockbourne. By June the wing boasted twenty-seven of the sleek new RB-47s. SAC, mean- while, which had agitated superiors to phase out all existing B-45s from its inventory, finally received permission to transfer them to the Tactical Air Command. Much, to SAC's surprise, six qualified combat crews were also ordered to TAG. Headquarters, SAC, protested this move, declaring that this infringed on their ability to carry out the emergency war plan, particularly since the 322nd Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron was converting to RB-47s. Air Staff officials agreed and reduced the number of transferees to two flight crews and sixteen tall gunners. In May, the first six RB-45Cs were released to TAG after reconditioning. These six would be followed by an additional four each month in July, August, and September, with the final aircraft departing in November. Those Tornados, finally sporting tail turrets, were ultimately transferred to the 363rd Training Wing at Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

3/27/2007 With an international audience standing watch, Col. Michael Cosby accepted the flag of command for the reactivated 363rd Training Group at an air base in the Persian Gulf region March 26. Though officially listed as an activation, officiating officer, Lt. Gen. Gary North, U.S. Central Command Air Forces and 9th Air Force commander, said it was more of a reactivation as the group celebrated a homecoming, continuing its rich history while adding to the Air Force's

heritage. "Reactivating the 363rd is a unique occasion," said General North. "It not only focuses on the bright future of this organization, but also reminds us of the history we all share as members of the United States Air Force." To appreciate the richness of this reactivation all one has to do was take a glimpse into the past and, most notably, at former 363rd Training Group commanders, to include then-Col. Mark Walsh and then-Col. Ralph Eberhart, who respectively commanded in 1972 and from 1988 to 1990. Along with prominent commanders who rose to Air Force greatness, the 363rd also engaged in some of history's most notable events, to include actions associated with the Cuban Missile Crisis. The 363rd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing deployed to Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., from Shaw AFB, S.C., in support of reconnaissance operations over Cuba. Pilots conducted their first RF-101 sorties over the island on Oct. 23, 1962. For this action, the 363rd was presented the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award by then-President John F. Kennedy. In his recognition of the 363rd and the 4080th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, a U-2 unit, President Kennedy said, "...the work of these two units has contributed as much to the security of the United States as any units in our history, and any group of men in our history." It is upon this very notable history that General North explained the group can build toward many bright tomorrows. "The squadron's first motto was 'Voir C'est savoir' which means 'to see is to know,'" said General North. "This rich history is an impressive image that speaks of the past that I'm sure under Colonel Cosby's leadership will stretch well into the future." Along with historical significance, it was also a personal homecoming for the general himself. From 1982 to 1986, then-Captain North served as the group's weapons officer. Four years later, then-Lieutenant Colonel North served as wing weapons officer, chief of wing safety and then squadron commander. Personified through General North, the 363rd knows only success. Again, relying on history to tell the story, after deactivating in 1993 following the Gulf War, the flag of command was raised again in the Middle East. In 1998, the 363rd Expeditionary Operations Group was activated at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, to enforce the no-fly zone over southern Iraq. Formerly known as Southern Watch, it continued its long history of combat operations through Operation Iraqi Freedom until its deactivation in 2003. Seventeen years later Lt. Gen. Gary North returned "home" and, as officiating officer, passed the flag of command to Colonel Cosby to continue the rich history of the 363rd. But more importantly, he did so while underscoring the importance as it relates to international partnerships. "That's a long history for an Air Force unit," said General North. "But it's a proud history that we now share with host nations. We're here to work side-by-side with our many international partners as we train, fly and build friendships. There is no better way to capitalize on the 363rd's history than here at the Air Warfare Center." Having reactivated the unit, General North closed with a reflection on how and why we celebrate our rich history and heritage through the use and re-use of groups and wings. "What is most amazing is how the unit is really not activating today, but coming back home to the Middle East," said General North. "It's the fulfillment of a vision to execute training operations side-by-side with our international partners with the next generation of young Airmen. It is our great collective fortune to combine many backgrounds in the group's role to facilitate and help in the training of airmen from many units and nations." Taking a personal moment while looking out over the crowd of more than 100 guests, General North said, "You just have to smile at the great opportunities to train in such a great environment. I know the glide path will be smooth, the vector sharp and results predictable." Having accepted the flag of command, Colonel Cosby closed the ceremony saying, "Seventeen years ago, I first served in the Middle East and fell in love with the desert, and I'm honored to be back in this key supporting training role. The entire Air Warfare Center is possible only through a tremendous cooperative, international effort. I'm honored and thrilled to call this place home."

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