

510th FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

Combat-ready F-16CG fighter squadron prepared to deploy and fly combat sorties as tasked by NATO and US combatant commanders. Performs air and space control and force application roles including counterair, strategic attack, interdiction, combat search and rescue (CSAR), close air support (CAS), and forward air control-airborne (FAC-A) missions. Employs a full range of the latest state-of-the-art precision ordnance.

LINEAGE

625th Bombardment Squadron (Dive) constituted, 4 Feb 1943
Activated, 1 Mar 1943
Redesignated 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 10 Aug 1943
Redesignated 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, Single Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Redesignated 510th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 27 Oct 1945
Redesignated 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 15 Oct 1952
Activated, 1 Dec 1952
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1958
Redesignated 510th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 11 Mar 1959
Activated, 9 Apr 1959
Inactivated, 15 Nov 1969
Activated, 1 Oct 1978
Inactivated, 1 Feb 1994
Redesignated 510th Fighter Squadron, 23 Mar 1994
Activated, 1 Jul 1994

STATIONS

Drew Field, FL, 1 Mar 1943
Walterboro AAFld, SC, 13 Sep 1943–14 Feb 1944
Christchurch, England, 6 Mar–22 Jun 1944
Picauville, France, 30 Jun 1944
St Dizier, France, 11 Sep 1944
Ophoven, Belgium, 6 Feb 1945
Kitzingen, Germany, 23 Apr 1945
Straubing, Germany, 14 May–2 Jul 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 25–27 Oct 1945
Godman AFB, KY, 1 Dec 1952
Langley AFB, VA, 17 Apr 1953–1 Jul 1958
Langley AFB, VA, 16 Apr 1953–1 Jul 1958
Clark AB, Luzon, 9 Apr 1959–14 Mar 1964
England AFB, LA, 16 Mar 1964–7 Nov 1965
Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam, 10 Nov 1965–15 Nov 1969
RAF Bentwaters, England, 1 Oct 1978
Spangdahlem AB, Germany, 4 Jan 1993–1 Feb 1994
Aviano AB, Italy, 1 Jul 1994

DEPLOYED STATION

Chai-Yi AB, Taiwan, 1–8 Jul and 2–12 Nov 1959
Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 11 May–8 Jun 1962
Clark AB, Philippines, 8 May–20 Aug 1965.

ASSIGNMENTS

405th Bombardment (later, 405th Fighter-Bomber; 405th Fighter) Group, 1 Mar 1943–27 Oct 1945
405th Fighter-Bomber Group, 1 Dec 1952
405th Fighter-Bomber Wing, 8 Oct 1957–1 Jul 1958
405th Fighter Wing, 9 Apr 1959
3rd Tactical Fighter Wing, 16 Mar 1964–15 Nov 1969
81st Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1978
52nd Operations Group, 1 Oct 1992–1 Feb 1994
31st Operations Group, 1 Jul 1994

ATTACHMENTS

Joint Task Force 116, 16 May–8 Jun 1962
405th Fighter Wing, c. 8 May–17 Aug 1965

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-24, 1943
A-24A
P-39, 1943
P-39Q

P-47, 1943-1945
P-47D
P-47G
F-84, 1953-1956
F-100, 1956-1958
F-100, 1959-1969
F-100D
F-100F
A-10, 1979
F-16CG
F-16DG

COMMANDERS

1Lt Glenn R. Doughty, 1 Mar 1943
Maj Bruce F. Parcell, 4 Nov 1943
Cpt Ralph C. Jenkins, 28 Jul 1944
Cpt Charles A. Appel, 29 Oct 1944
Cpt Clyde V. Knisley, 18 Nov 1944
LTC Ralph C. Jenkins, 19 Jan 1945-unkn
Unkn, 1 Jun-27 Oct 1945
Maj Robert S. Peterson, 1 Dec 1952
Maj Westwood H. Fletcher Jr., Mar 1953
LTC Robert R. Scott, Dec 1953
Maj Donald W. Allen, 15 Jun 1956
Maj Marvin T. Johnson, c. 15 Apr-1 Jul 1958
Col Carlos E. Dannacher, 9 Apr 1959
Maj John P. Anderson, 10 Apr 1959
LTC Stephen P. Ham, 1 Jun 1959
LTC Donald E. Miller, 13 Jul 1959
Maj Joseph F. Martin, Jun 1961
LTC Lawrence J. Pickett, 6 Jul 1961
LTC William E. Charlson, c. 1 May 1962
Maj Allen S. Nelson, c. 18 Mar 1964
Maj Harold M. Christiansen, 21 Jun 1966
LTC Robert E. Erikson, 1 Oct 1966
LTC Alonzo W. Groves, 1 Mar 1967
LTC Lloyd G. McBride, 10 Nov 1967
LTC Robert H. McIntosh, 1 Aug 1968
LTC David P. Proctor Jr., 1 Feb 1969
Maj Ronald M. Clements, 6 Sep 1969
LTC William I. Chenault, 10 Oct-15 Nov 1969
None (not manned), 1 Oct 1978-24 Mar 1979
LTC Howard T. Moss, 24 Mar 1979
LTC Rufus D. Harris, 23 Mar 1981

LTC Gerald D. Felix, 28 Jul 1982
LTC Arthur R. Hedlund Jr., 16 Jun 1984
LTC James C. Elliott, 31 Jul 1986
LTC Leslie R. Dyer III, 8 Mar 1988
LTC Patrick J. Garvey, 8 May 1989
LTC Dale A. Elliott, 6 Mar 1992
LTC Thomas D. Popp, 1 Oct 1992-1 Feb 1994
LTC Gary C. West, 1 Jul 1994
LTC Edward J. Ryder, 15 Mar 1996
LTC David C. Nichols, 27 Jun 1997
LTC Steven Schrader, 18 Jun 1999
LTC Terrance J. O'Shaughnessy, 27 Apr 2001
LTC Michael A. Fantini, 19 Jul 2002
LTC Jon W. Walker, 9 Jul 2004
LTC Adrian C. Pone, 31 May 2006

LTC Robert R. Scott, #@1955
LTC Gary West, #1995

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Vietnam

Vietnam Defensive

Vietnam Air

Vietnam Air Offensive

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III

Vietnam Air/Ground

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV

TET 69/Counteroffensive

Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969

Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

France, 24 Sep 1944

Presidential Unit Citations (Vietnam)

8 Jun 1966–16 Apr 1967

6 Mar 1968–31 Jul 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

31 Jan–5 Mar 1968

1 Aug–16 Nov 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Nov 1960–30 Jun 1961

1 May 1964–16 Jul 1965

1 Jul 1979–30 Jun 1981

1 Jul 1981–30 Jun 1983

1 Jun 1989–31 May 1991

1 Jun 1991–30 Jun 1993

1 Jun 1989-31 May 1991

1 Jun 1991-30 Jun 1993

1 Oct 1992-30 Jun 1993

1 Apr 1994-1 Apr 1996

2 Apr 1996-1 Apr 1998

24 Mar-10 Jun 1999

1 Oct 2000-1 Oct 2002

2 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

6 Jun–30 Sep 1944

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm

25 Nov 1965–19 May 1969

1 Apr 1966–15 Nov 1969

EMBLEM



In May 1944 the squadron insignia was submitted for approval. The insignia was designed by Sgt. Lynn Frank. Approved, 7 Jul 1944





On a disc per bend Royal Purple and Black, between a bendlet White, a falcon's head erased of the last, shaded Light Blue, eye and pupil indicated in Black, his beak open; and issuing from base a demi-sphere Light Blue, outline of three entwined White elliptical rings around a Red atom; the perimeter of the rings marked with six smaller atoms; three lightning bolts radiating downward from the symbol over the sphere all White, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disk, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "BUZZARDS" in Black letters. Attached below the disk, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "510TH FIGHTER SQ" in Black letters. **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 field of the Teutonic shaped shield, is partitioned by an honorable heraldic bend with the unit colors, royal purple and black. The falcon's head symbolically depicts the unit as a swift, fierce deterrent force; the atomic symbol denotes the ability to employ weapon systems of progressively advanced design, the lightning, striking the earth at widely separate points, indicates the capability of powerful attacks worldwide. The white bendlet indicates this great power will be used wisely and with purity of thought to protect, preserve, and establish peace and liberty always. (Approved, 14 Feb 1957 replaced emblems approved, 8 Sep 1953)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Buzzards

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 11 Apr 1944–1 May 1945. Combat in Southeast Asia, 12 Nov 1965–15 Oct 1969. Close air support for NATO exercises, Aug 1979–Dec 1992. Deployed aircraft and personnel to Turkey to support Kurdish relief in Northern Iraq, 6 Sep–10 Dec 1991, 8 Apr–10 Jun 1992, and 6 Aug–30 Oct 1992.

The 510th Fighter Squadron was originally formed as the 625th Bombardment Squadron (Dive), 405th Bombardment Group, at Drew Field, Fla., in 1943, flying the Douglas A-24 BANSHEE. On August 15, 1943, the 625th was renamed the 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron.

In late 1943, the squadron moved to Walterboro Army Air Field, South Carolina, and began flying the Bell P-39 AIRACOBRA, and then the Republic P-47 THUNDERBOLT. In March of 1944, the 510th moved to Christchurch, England, and began combat operations.

During WWII, the 510th moved to mainland Europe with the advance of Allied troops, flying from Picauville and St Dizier, France; Ophoven, Belgium; and Kitzingen, Germany. The unit was credited with 39 kills.

In late 1945, the 510th was deactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. In 1952, the 510th was reactivated at Godman AFB, Ky., flying the Republic F-84 THUNDERSTREAK. In April of 1953, the squadron relocated to Langley AFB, Va., and transitioned to the North American F-100 SUPER SABRE. In 1959, the 510th moved to Clark AB, Philippines. In 1964, the squadron moved to England AFB, Louisiana.

At the start of the Vietnam War, the 510th established a new home at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam. Bien Hoa became the birth place of the "BIEN HOA BUZZARDS". The 510th flew over 27,200 combat missions in Southeast Asia. In 1969, the unit again deactivated.

In 1979, the 510th reactivated at RAF Bentwaters, England, and began receiving the Fairchild A-10 THUNDERBOLT II. In 1991, the 510th deployed to Incirlik AB, Turkey, in support of Operation DESERT STORM and Operation PROVIDE COMFORT.

In 1993, the 510th relocated to Spangdahlem AB, Germany. During 1993-1994, the 510th flew more than 1,700 combat sorties from Aviano AB, Italy, in support of Operation DENY FLIGHT. In the skies over Bosnia-Herzegovina, the squadron became the infamous "BOSNIA BUZZARDS".

The 510th was deactivated in April 1994 and reactivated at Aviano AB, Italy on July 1, 1994 as the 510th FS "BOSNIA BUZZARDS" flying the General Dynamics/Lockheed F-16CG VIPER. The BOSNIA BUZZARDS, during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE, were the first F-16 Block 40 squadron to drop a Laser Guided Bomb.

The 510th led the Tactical Air Forces with the first combat use of Night Vision Goggles in an F-16 during Operation DELIBERATE GUARD. The BOSNIA BUZZARDS led the way by being one of the first F-16 units to become Forward Air Controllers (FAC-A), and were the first to employ as FAC-A's in combat in the F-16.

In OPERATION ALLIED FORCE, the Air War over Serbia, the Buzzards distinguished themselves by flying more combat missions than any other F-16 squadron. Subsequently the "BALKAN BUZZARDS" have expanded into an Expeditionary Air Force, the worldwide "FIGHTIN'

BUZZARDS" and were the first Aviano fighter squadron to deploy to OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH IN June 2000 and to OPERATION NORTHERN WATCH in June and December of 2001. During those deployments the "FIGHTIN' BUZZARDS" engaged in combat operations over Iraq in both surface attack and combat search and rescue (CSAR). In September to December 2002, the Buzzards returned to OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH and dropped 136,508 pounds of ordinance over Iraq to include the first GBU-31A JDAM in F-16 CG combat history. The world's finest fighter squadron, the "FIGHTIN' BUZZARDS" continue to fly the world's finest fighter the F-16CG FIGHTING FALCON at Aviano AB, Italy.

The 510th Fighter Bomber Squadron was first activated 1 March 1943 as the 625th Bomber Squadron (D) a squadron of the 405th Bomber Group (D). The 625th was stationed at Drew Field, Tampa, Florida and flew A-24's. In August 1943 the squadron converted to P-38's and was changed to the 510th Fighter Bomber Squadron.

In September 1943 the 510th transferred to Walterboro, South Carolina and converted to P-47's in November of that year. Under the command of Major Parcell the 510th arrived in England on 6 March 1944 as part of the 9th Fighter Command. On 11 April the 510th flew their first fighter sweep on the north west coast of France, and flew their first dive bomb mission on 26 April. On 30 April the first Air Medals were given to the pilots of the 510th.

On 15 May 1944 the 510th had its first bailout in enemy territory, and the first pilot was killed in action on 13 June.

In July 1944 the 510th moved to France. On 27 July the Commanding Officer, Lt. Colonel Parcell was killed in action on his 61st mission.

The 510th was again activated in Dec. 1952 to replace the 149th Fighter Bomber Squadron which was deactivated. The 510th was at Godman AFB at that time and moved to Langley in April 1953.

510th flew over 27,200 combat missions in Southeast Asia. In 1969, it again deactivated.

The 510th reactivated on 1 October 1978 at RAF Bentwaters, England, and was assigned to the 3d Tactical Fighter Wing (though attached to the 405th Fighter Wing, c. 8 May-17 August 1965). It was reassigned to the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, on 1 October 1978. The squadron began operating the A-10 aircraft in 1979. The squadron began providing close air support for NATO exercises, starting August 1979 and this until December 1992. The 510th deployed aircraft and personnel to Turkey to support Kurdish relief in Northern Iraq, from 6 September-10 December 1991; from 8 April-10 June 1992; and from 6 August-30 October 1992. Reassigned to the 52 Operations Group on 1 October 1992, the 510th relocated to Spangdahlem AB, Germany. The 510th Fighter Squadron completed transferring aircraft from RAF Bentwaters, England, to Spangdahlem, Germany on 4 January 1993. This completed the transition of the 510th Fighter Squadron from Bentwaters, which closed in 1993. With the final two aircraft, the 510th FS had its full complement of 18 A-10 and six OA-10 aircraft. Spangdahlem's 52nd Fighter Wing

received its first operational A-10s from Bentwaters in October 1992 and was receiving aircraft from England about every two weeks during the transition.

During 1993-1994, the 510th flew more than 1,700 combat sorties, from Aviano AB, Italy, in support of Operation Deny Flight. In the skies over Bosnia-Herzegovina, the squadron became the infamous : "Bosnia Buzzards". The 510th inactivated on 1 February 1994. Redesignated as the 510th Fighter Squadron "Bosnia Buzzards" on 23 March 1994, it activated on 1 July 1994 at Aviano AB, Italy, and was assigned to the 31st Fighter Wing's Operations Group flying the General Dynamics/Lockheed F-16CG.

The Bosnia Buzzards, during Operation Deliberate Force, were the first F-16 Block 40 squadron to drop a Laser Guided Bomb. The 510th led the Tactical Air Forces with the 1st combat use of Night Vision Goggles in an F-16 during Operation Deliberate Guard. The Bosnia Buzzards led the way by being one of the first F-16 units to become Forward Air Controllers (FAC-A) and were the first to employ as FAC-A's in combat in the F-16.

In Operation Allied Force, the Air War over Serbia, the Buzzards distinguished themselves by flying more combat missions than any other F-16 squadron. Subsequently the "Balkan Buzzards" have expanded into an Expeditionary Air Force, the worldwide "Fightin' Buzzards" and were the first Aviano fighter squadron to deploy to Operation Southern Watch in June 2000 and to Operation Northern Watch in June and December of 2001. During those deployments the "Fightin' Buzzards" engaged in combat operations over Iraq in both surface attack and Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR). In September to December 2002, the Buzzards returned to Operation Southern Watch and dropped 136,508 pounds of ordinance over Iraq to include the first GBU-31A JDAM in F-16CG combat history.

The 510th TFS activated at Bentwaters on October 1, 1978, and becoming the 81 st's second operational A-10 squadron. The 510th ceased operations in December, 1992, and moved to the 52nd FW as the 51 Oth FS in January, 1993. The squadron tail stripe was magenta, later with white borders, a white buzzard's head was later added.

On 18 July 2001, at 1009L (0709Z), an F-16CG, serial number (S/N) 89-2050, crashed 10.5 nautical miles (NM) east of Batman, Turkey. The F-16CG, assigned to the 510 Fighter Squadron (FS), 31 Fighter Wing (FW), Aviano AB, Italy, was part of a 2-ship formation conducting an Operation Northern Watch (ONW) mission. The mishap pilot (MP), assigned to the 510 FS, ejected safely. Following the ejection the MP was examined at Incirlik AB, Turkey, and released with minor injuries. There was only minor damage to private property and no civilian injuries in this mishap. Approximately 35 minutes after initial takeoff from Incirlik AB, Turkey, the MP heard a loud bang followed by a loud buzzing noise. Engine instruments indicated decreasing RPM with rising fan turbine inlet temperature (FTIT). The MP immediately turned towards the nearest divert airfield, recognized sub-idle RPM indications and attempted an airstart. The MP pilot attempted nine additional airstarts, emergency jettisoning his stores after the third airstart attempt, before ejecting at approximately 2,000 feet AGL. The mishap aircraft (MA) was destroyed beyond economical repair. Combat Search and Rescue (CS AR) assets located at

Diyarbaldr, Turkey, promptly and safely recovered the MP. There is clear and convincing evidence indicating the primary cause of the mishap was the catastrophic failure of the No. 4 bearing assembly. This failure, in turn, led to a downward shift of the compressor, causing turbine blade-to-shroud interference. Evidence showed severe compressor blade tip rub on the honeycomb seals on the rear stages of compressor due to axial shift of the core. This caused severe engine RPM degradation to a point insufficient for providing thrust. Distance to the nearest recovery field was beyond the MA's glide capabilities, thus negating any chance of safely recovering the MA. Post-impact examination of the recovered wreckage indicates the aircraft was structurally intact and all aircraft systems, except the engine and radios, were operating within operational parameters prior to ground impact.

On 18 September 2007, at 1632 Zulu (1832 Local), an F-16CG from the 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano Air Base, Italy, impacted the ground in a forested area near Soramae, Italy. The mishap aircraft (MA), Serial Number 88-0529, was destroyed upon impact. The mishap pilot (MP), assigned to the 510th Fighter Squadron, ejected safely, without injury. There were no civilian or military casualties. No personal property was damaged.

The MP was number one of a four ship formation planning to conduct day opposed surface attack tactics. This training mission was also the MP's certification flight to be upgraded to an instructor pilot. He was current and qualified to fly the mission. Preparation and planning were sufficient. While the flight was reduced to a three-ship formation when one member had to abort the mission before take-off, for reasons unrelated to the mishap, preflight and ground operations were normal. Forecast weather included the potential for instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) and thunderstorms on departure and in the assigned airspace for the mishap flight.

The causes of this mishap, supported by clear and convincing evidence, were pilot action and an aircraft malfunction that combined to produce a departure from controlled flight. Once the MA departed controlled flight, the aircraft malfunction also led to the inability to recover the MA.

The MP encountered severe weather on departure with flight through IMC including thunder-storm and icing conditions. Eight minutes after takeoff, the MA's flight control computer began to receive unchanging, incorrect angle of attack (AOA) inputs. The freezing of the F-16 AOA probe is a design deficiency confirmed by expert analysis. Once frozen, the probes no longer input accurate data to the flight control system. As the MP attempted to gain and maintain visual meteorological conditions (VMC), he climbed to the top limit of the airspace, over 35,000 feet above mean sea level. In doing so, he allowed his airspeed to decay below 148 knots calibrated airspeed (KCAS) and achieved an actual AOA that exceeded critical levels. The faulty, unchanging AOA signal prevented the MA from making automatic flight control inputs to reduce the MA's actual, high AOA. This malfunction, combined with the MA's slow airspeed, led to departure from controlled flight. Once the MA departed controlled flight, the frozen AOA probes continued to provide incorrect flight parameters to the flight control system masking the actual AOA and preventing flight control inputs designed to affect self recovery of the MA.

Additionally, there were two factors contributing to the mishap, both supported by substantial evidence. First, severe weather in the assigned airspace for the mishap flight contributed in a number of ways. Icing conditions contributed to the MA malfunction; the high

altitude of the cloud tops led the MP to climb to the top of the airspace; the lack of a clear horizon likely induced unrecognized Type 1 spatial disorientation in the MP, contributing to his failure to recognize the MA's slow airspeed. Second, the mishap flight evaluator (MFE) pilot did not act to direct the flight away from operating in thunderstorm conditions and did not intervene when he recognized the MP flew the MA into a high-altitude, slow-speed condition.

On 24 March 2009 at approximately 1506 hours local time (L), an F-16CM fighter aircraft, S/N 89-2102, experienced an engine flame out approximately 20 nautical miles south of Aviano Air Base, Italy. The mishap aircraft (MA) was assigned to the 510th Fighter Squadron (FS), 31 Fighter Wing (FW), based at Aviano Air Base, Italy. The mishap pilot (MP) was assigned to the 510 FS, 31 FW, Aviano Air Base, Italy. The MP jettisoned his external wing tanks approximately seven nautical miles south of Aviano Air Base, Italy and accomplished a successful flame out landing on runway 05. One wing tank impacted a storage structure connected to an occupied dwelling causing significant damage to the structure and its contents as well as damage to the surrounding environment. The other wing tank impacted a road in very close proximity to two occupied and two unoccupied dwellings causing damage to the dwellings and the surrounding environment. No personnel were injured, the tanks were destroyed and aircraft damage was confined to the engine and its components. The mishap sortie began as the second sortie of a day, pit and go during the MP's four-ship flight lead certification with the Squadron Commander as the wingman and instructor pilot (IP). After leveling the aircraft at 16000 feet mean sea level (MSL) and on an air traffic control (ATC) vector to the working airspace, the MP experienced a sudden loss of thrust. He immediately pointed the aircraft at Aviano Air Base and maintained level flight to establish optimum gear up glide speed of 250 knots. The MP assessed that he was at the outer edge of glide range. When directed by his IP and after visually confirming that the aircraft was over a sparsely populated area, he jettisoned his wing tanks and slowed the aircraft to the new optimum gear up speed of 235 knots. He maintained his heading and configuration until he determined that he had sufficient energy to maneuver the aircraft to align the aircraft with runway 05. He configured the aircraft on short final using normal gear extension procedures and accomplished an uneventful roundout, flare and touchdown approximately 2000 feet beyond the approach end of runway 05.

After engaging the arresting cable, the MP accomplished the critical action procedures for fuel leak on the ground, and emergency ground egress. The sudden loss of thrust was the result of fuel starvation caused by a massive fuel leak at the connection between the fuel/oil cooler fuel discharge outlet and the main fuel tube. The seal at this connection failed because technical orders regarding this connection were not properly followed by the engine maintenance personnel who performed and verified the maintenance. By clear and convincing evidence, the cause of the mishap was failure to perform maintenance in accordance with established technical orders.

Six F-16s from Aviano AB, Italy, arrived in Romania for a two-week air-to-air and air-to-ground interoperability exercise with Romanian air force Mig-21s last week. "This exercise has been planned for over a year now," said Lt. Col. Christopher Austin, 510th Fighter Squadron commander, in an April 11 release. "We're here to conduct range operations and joint exercise sorties with our NATO partners to enhance interoperability." Since Romania agreed to purchase

a dozen F-16s from Portugal last year, the exercise is an opportunity for Romanian airmen to take notes on their future mission, according to the release. More than 450 US and Romanian airmen are taking part in Exercise Dacian Viper at Campia Turzii AB, Romania, April 10-17, according to a Romanian news agency report. 2014

From December 2003 to early March 2004, the 510 FS deployed to the region in support of OEF and OIF. Flying almost 900 sorties, including 750 combat sorties, the squadron flew close air support (CAS) and airborne forward air control (FAC-A) missions. Of note, squadron pilots were overhead during and participated in the capture of Saddam Hussein on 13 December 2003. Further, the 510th's overhead presence contributed to a 50% reduction in improvised explosive device and infrastructure attacks against Coalition forces. The 555 FS replaced the 510th and, like the Buzzards, the Nickel supported OEF and OIF where they were active in OEF's "MOUNTAIN STORM" in Afghanistan. In Iraq, the squadron performed the first true urban close air support (CAS) missions in recent history, a first in the F-16. Additionally, the 555th spearheaded development of CENTAF's tactics, techniques, and procedures to support and defend convoys. Finally, the squadron pioneered the Air Force's first operational F-16 employment of Advance Targeting Pods.

In 2000, the wing began its full-fledged participation in the Expeditionary Air Force. From March to September 2000, the 510th and 555th Fighter Squadrons conducted back-to-back deployments to Ahmed Al Jaber AB, Kuwait, in support of Operation Southern WATCH (OSW). While at Al Jaber, the squadrons flew over 400 combat sorties providing precision-guided munitions (PGM) delivery while patrolling the southern NFZ. Then, the "Scorpions" of the 603rd Air Control Squadron (603 ACS) deployed to Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait from February to June 2001. As the core of the 386th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, the 121 personnel of the 603rd served as the primary air control squadron for OSW. Significantly, the deployment marked the first-ever deployment of the 603rd outside of Europe.

The 31 FW received two new squadrons at that time, the 510th and 555th Fighter Squadrons, along with their Block-40 F-16s. The wing immediately became involved with events in Bosnia, part of the former communist country of Yugoslavia, in May 1994, as part of Operation DENY FLIGHT. A year later, the country held its breath as a massive rescue operation took place to extract Captain Scott O'Grady of the 555 FS from behind enemy lines. A US Marine Corps HH-53 picked him up after he evaded capture for six days. In August and September, Operation DELIBERATE FORCE began and the 31 FW conducted air strikes against Bosnian Serbs conducting ethnic purges among the Muslim population of the country. Peacekeeping operations continued in the Balkans through the end of 2004, when the European Union assumed responsibility for the region.

F-16s from Aviano AB, Italy, deployed to Ämari AB, Estonia, for several weeks of cooperative forward air control training with Estonian air force joint terminal attack controllers. The pilots of Aviano's 510th Fighter Squadron will practice acting as airborne forward air controllers and work with Estonian JTACs at the nearby Tapa Range, according to an Aviano release. "The FAC(A) mission is one of the most challenging missions we engage in," said 510th FS

Commander Lt. Col. Christopher Austin. "It enables us to provide precision support to troops in contact with the enemy, and training on it with our Estonian partners leverages specialization," he added. A total of 14 jets and 280 pilots, maintainers, and support personnel deployed to Ämari on March 20 and will be there until April 17. In addition to the NATO training with Estonia, the Aviano jets and personnel will conduct separate air-to-air training drills with Partnership for Peace countries Sweden and Finland, states the release. 2015