

926 WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

926 Troop Carrier Group, Medium established and activated, 28 Dec 1962
Organized in the Reserve, 17 Jan 1963
Redesignated 926 Tactical Airlift Group, 1 Jul 1967
Redesignated 926 Tactical Fighter Group, 1 Apr 1978
Redesignated 926 Fighter Group, 1 Feb 1992
Redesignated 926 Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1994
Redesignated 926 Group, 17 Aug 2007
Redesignated 926 Wing, 5 Dec 2014

STATIONS

New Orleans NAS (later, NAS JRB ANG; ARS, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans), LA,
17 Jan 1963
Nellis AFB, NV, 17 Aug 2007

ASSIGNMENTS

446 Troop Carrier (later, 446 Tactical Airlift) Wing, 17 Jan 1963
433 Tactical Airlift (later, 433 Military Airlift) Wing, 1 Mar 1968
446 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Oct 1969
442 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Jul 1972
434 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jan 1978
442 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Feb 1984
917 Tactical Fighter (later, 917 Fighter) Wing, 1 Jul 1987
301 Fighter Wing, 1 Aug 1992

Tenth Air Force, 1 Oct 1994

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-119, 1963-1970

C-130, 1969-1978

A-37, 1978-1982

A-10, 1981-1992

F-16, 1992

A-10, 1996

OA-10, 1996

COMMANDERS

Col Hilliard F. Kelly, 17 Jan 1963

Col Richard E. George, 6 Oct 1972 (temporary)

Col James L. Wade, 2 Nov 1972

Col John G. Sullivan, by Sep 1974

Col Richard H. Kliemann, 1 Oct 1977

Col Bruce P. Wood, 4 May 1981

Col William D. Tracy, 21 Aug 1983

Col Robert L. Efferson, 1 Jul 1987

Col Rudolph August, 1 Jan 1991 (acting)

Col Robert L. Efferson, 17 May 1991

Col Jack C. Ihle, 31 Jan 1993

Col Robert E. Lytle, 13 Aug 1995

Col James Mills, 1 Apr 1998

Col Robert R. Swain Jr., 27 Nov 2001

Col Randall Falcon, 1 Dec 2002

Col Steve Arthur, 27 Sep 2004

Col John Breeden

Col Herman C. Brunke, Jr. (Interim) 17 Aug 2011

Col John Breeden

Col Ross Anderson, 31 Jul 2014

Col Michael Schultz, 14 Oct 2017

Col Sean M. Carpenter, 4 Aug 2019

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudia Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device
2 Apr – 31 Jul 2002

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

26 Jan 1968 – 10 Jan 1972

1 Apr 1978 – 20 Jan 1980

1 Apr 1988 – 31 Mar 1990

27 Aug 2007 – 26 Aug 2009

1 Oct 2012 – 30 Sep 2013

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

14 Feb 1968-6 Nov 1972

EMBLEM



926 Tactical Fighter Group emblem: 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 globe represents the unit's participation in the Air Force global reach mission. The fleur-de-lis symbolizes the rich heritage found in Louisiana, the first home of the unit. The wings and contrails denote the soaring standards and capabilities of the personnel of the unit. (Approved, 22 Nov 1982)



926 Fighter Wing emblem: Azure, issuing from base a demi-globe with axis palewise Dark Blue, rimmed and gridlined Or below a fleur-de-lis Gules between two aircraft ascending, one to dexter chief and one to sinister chief of the last, each emitting an arced vapor trail to base surmounting the demi-globe Or; all within a diminished bordure of the last. Attached below the shield a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed" 926th FIGHTER WING" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and 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 globe represents the unit's participation in the Air Force global reach mission. The red cross symbolizes the medical care provided by unit personnel. The wings and contrails denote the air evacuation capabilities and the flying personnel of the squadron.



926 Group emblem: Azure, issuing from base a demi-globe with axis palewise Dark Blue, rimmed and grid lined Or below a fleur-de-lis Gules between two aircraft ascending, one to dexter chief and one to sinister chief of the last, each emitting an arched vapor trail to base surmounting the demi-globe Or; all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "926TH GROUP" in Blue 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 globe represents the unit's participation in the Air Force global reach mission. The fleur-de-lis symbolizes the rich heritage found in Louisiana, the first home of the unit. The wings and contrails denote the soaring standards and capabilities of the personnel of the unit.



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MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Airlifted troops and cargo worldwide, 1963-1978, including airlift to Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War and numerous humanitarian airlift operations. Trained in A-37 and A-10 offensive and defensive capabilities, including close air support, 1978-1992. Deployed with A-10s to Saudi Arabia, 1 Jan-17 May 1991. Executed battlefield interdiction and close air support during the Southwest Asia War, Jan-Feb 1991; group pilot credited with the first A-10 air-to-air kill on 6 Feb 1991. Transitioned to F-16 fighters in 1992. Deployed to Italy and participated in UN operations to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia, Mar-Apr 1995.

The 926th TCG operated C-119s at NAS New Orleans under control of the 446th TCW since January 1963. The unit was redesignated 926th TAG in July 1967 and converted to C-130AS in December 1969. The 926th was transferred to the 442nd TAW in July 1972 and converted to C-130BS in

November 1973, before converting to the A-37B in April 1978 as the 926th TFG. The 706th TFS was assigned to the 434th TFW. Equipment changed to the A-10A in January 1982.

1971, Effective 30 June, the Tactical Airlift Command became the gaining command for the Alamo Wing, when the 921 Military Airlift Group and the 922 Tactical Airlift Group merged. The new designation the 921 TAG, like the 922nd, had six C-130B aircraft assigned. During the conversion to the C-130B model, the 921st still had C-124s. These aircraft would remain for the support of the Vietnam conflict in Southeast Asia. The aircraft belonged to the 916th Military Airlift Wing, the world" in five years with their Carswell AFB, and Texas. The 926th became the third group in the wing structure of the Alamo Wing as of 1 June. The last C-124 belonging to the 921 TAG departed Kelly on 19 July. The last C-124 flew to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. By the time the 921 TAG era ended, the unit had flown the C-124s for 5 years and logged more than 50,000 accident free hours. The unit hauled millions of tons of supplies, equipment and thousands of passengers. The heaviest workload for the C-124 and crew came in support of the Armed Forces in Southeast Asia.

By the end of the year, the 921st Tactical Airlift Group had eight C-130Bs assigned and the 922d Tactical Airlift Group had seven C-130Bs assigned.

The 926th FG deployed A-10s during Desert Storm, and one aircraft scored a cannon kill over an Iraqi helicopter.

An Air Force Reserve Command group at Nellis AFB, Nev., was redesignated the 926th Wing, overseeing geographically dispersed squadrons and missions through the Air Force Warfare Center, according to a Dec. 10 release. Both the 926th Operations Group at Nellis and the 726th OG at Creech AFB, Nev., also were activated following the Dec. 5 ceremony. The 926th Wing, an associate unit to the US Air Force Warfare Center at Nellis, consists of 13 geographically separated squadrons encompassing a range of missions, from remotely piloted aircraft operations to space aggressors.

The 726th OG at Creech oversees two RPA attack squadrons, which are integrated with Creech's 432nd Wing, and a training squadron. The newly designated 926th WG falls under 10th Air Force at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, Texas, which integrates Reservists into the wing's associated Active Duty USAF units. The wing's Reservists are "working directly with and for the Active Duty, and our job here is to support, supplement, [and] provide continuity to the combat missions, the testing and the training," said Col. Ross Andersen the 926th WG commander. 2014

The 926th Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., will be Air Force Reserve Command's first wing affected by the most recent Base Realignment and Closure Commission actions. Resources from the 926th began realigning to four bases — Buckley Air Force Base, Colo.; Nellis AFB, Nev.; Whiteman AFB, Mo.; and Barksdale AFB, La. — March 15. That's about a year ahead of the original BRAC schedule. The movement of the wing's A-10 aircraft to Whiteman and Barksdale will remain temporary until environmental impact assessments are completed. While the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina certainly contributed to the decision to realign the 926th earlier than expected, AFRC officials said other factors played a much more significant role.

"The timeline for moving aircraft and closing the 926th Fighter Wing is based on two key factors: the need to transform the military and the way we do business, and taking care of our personnel,"

said Maj. Gen. Charles Stenner, director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC, Robins AFB, Ga. "In order to promote the readiness of our flying wings, resources from the 926th must shift to other bases. Mission demands dictate that timeline." After assessing the damage done by the hurricane, it was determined that the unit would not be able to maintain wartime readiness past a certain point. "Moving the A-10s to two of our other bases will increase overall mission effectiveness," General Stenner said. Before the moves are considered permanent, the units receiving the BRAC additions must successfully complete environmental impact evaluations over the next few months.

In addition to the aircraft and equipment moves, the realignment is scheduled to move about 840 people from New Orleans by Sept. 30. "It is never the easy or desirable course of action to displace men and women who have devoted their lives to defending our nation," General Stenner said. "People are our most valuable asset, and we'll do everything possible to assist every member of the unit — traditional Reservists, technicians and civilians — in finding new jobs." In addition to helping meet mission demands, closing the New Orleans wing early will also provide displaced members with a head start on making long-term plans. "Our people will be given the first shot at job positions created by this move," said Col. Steve Arthur, 926th FW commander. "I feel confident that anyone who wants a job will have opportunities."

Active-duty and Reserve members at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., marked a milestone Oct. 22 as the U.S. Air Force's MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper aircraft accumulated 2 million flight hours. The Reserve presence in the remotely piloted aircraft program began at Nellis in 2002, and Reservists have been in lock step with their regular Air Force counterparts ever since, flying combat operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "It's absolutely amazing to witness the growth of not only the program but the Reserve footprint," said Col. John Breeden, 926th Group commander. Breeden was the first Reservist to join Predator operations at Nellis and the first to qualify to fly the aircraft.

Over the course of a decade, his career evolved from working missile integration and tactics development to overseeing two RPA squadrons operating both the Predator and Reaper. "Our charge is to augment our RegAF total force partners with sustained expertise at the operational and tactical levels of warfare," Breeden said. "The Reserve entered the RPA program on the ground floor and provides continuity in training and conducting intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities worldwide."

The significant demand for sorties resulted in the growth from an initial 10 positions allotted to the Reserve to two squadrons under the 926th Group, responsible for 5 percent of the Air Force's combat air patrols. Today, the 78th and 91st Attack Squadrons integrate their pilots, sensor operators and intelligence personnel into the RegAF's 432nd Wing/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing and provide 10 percent of the manning for the associated combat squadrons' CAPs. "This milestone demonstrates how well the Reserve and RegAF integrate on this platform," said Col. Brent Caldwell, deputy group commander for RPA operations. 2013

"The partnership between the 926th Group and 432nd Wing/AEW is a benchmark total force integration model for the Air Force and Air Force Reserve," he said. In addition to the attack squadrons, the 2nd Special Operations Squadron has contributed more than 35,000 flying hours and 2,300 sorties in the MQ-1 since its stand-up at Nellis in 2008. It is the only Air Force Reserve

Command unit flying U.S. Southern Command-owned RPA missions. "We bring a persistent intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and strike capability to a customer engaged in the prosecution of this war," said Lt. Col. Randal Russell, 2nd SOS commander. "I couldn't be prouder of the professionalism of our men and women — they are engaged and doing a phenomenal job supporting our combat operations downrange," Russell said. 2013

Some 251 years later, members of the 926th Fighter Wing, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., a unit known as the "Fighting Cajuns," faced their own version of expulsion, this time at the hands of the latest Base Realignment and Closure Commission. In September, the 926th became the first Air Force Reserve Command unit to be closed by the latest BRAC. Although not as tragic as the Great Expulsion, the closure is nevertheless forcing people, who proudly embody the spirit of the Cajuns, to once again pick up their lives and start anew. For many, their lives were just getting back to normal after the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina. While the original Cajuns brought their skills for farming and fishing to Louisiana, 926th FW Airmen will bring their vast skills and experiences, along with a piece of the unit's rich heritage — a heritage that stretched from World War II to the Global War on Terrorism, with a presence in New Orleans since 1958 — to other Reserve units throughout the country.

To commemorate the closing of the unit, in the true spirit of New Orleans, the 926th FW hosted a farewell banquet and deactivation party Aug. 12, 2006, at the downtown Sheraton. The party, held a month before the unit's official closure, was named Operation Cajun Sunset. A distinguished aspect of New Orleans culture is the jazz funeral. In 1819, architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe said New Orleans jazz funerals were "peculiar to New Orleans alone among all American cities." In his book "Bourbon Street Black," the late jazzman Danny Barker noted the funeral is seen as "a major celebration." The roots of the jazz funeral date back to Africa. And it was with a similar approach that the Cajuns bid farewell. Although the unit was closing, the Reservists treated the occasion as a celebration of the past as well as the present. "This party is a way to bring closure," said Col. Larry Merington, 926th FW commander.

"It's a celebration, not a funeral, that goes back to the people we've worked with and for, who helped make a difference on this planet; a celebration of members who served over the last 50 years in this wing. We are closing a chapter of this book, so someone else will open a new chapter in our history." "The significance really for tonight is to relish the relationships and friendships we've made over the years and to highlight the history of this unit, which goes a long way back," said Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, AFRC commander. "We've got a lot of folks from many decades ago who are here with us tonight. This unit has had a long and proud history, and I'm just glad we've put together a firstclass event so that people currently in the unit and those who were in the unit before can come together and celebrate the 926th Fighter Wing." A year ago, far from being in a celebratory mood, members of the 926th were trying to get through the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, all the while dealing with the upcoming BRAC.

Of the slightly more than 1,000 people in the wing, 66 percent were negatively impacted by Katrina, with 34 percent either completely losing or being displaced from their homes, Colonel Merington said. While recovering from that terrible blow to their personal lives, they were faced with turmoil in their professional lives created by the wing's closure. "All of these life-changing events in 12 months," Colonel Merington said. "Most people don't go through that much in 20

years. These are some resilient people, as courageous as any people I've seen." No matter how resilient or courageous the folks of the 926th FW appeared to be on the outside, Colonel Merington said the wing's leadership was concerned about the members' mental state. The unit was recommended for closure before Katrina, but after the natural disaster, the process was expedited, causing increased stress.

"After Katrina hit, we went from (a closure timeline of) 2 1/2 years to nine months," Colonel Merington said. "It was a unique situation. People suffered disparaging harm from the hurricane, and then they had to go through BRAC. We became very concerned about what to do." Wing leadership tapped into available Air Force and AFRC programs and brought in some counselors to help members cope with all the issues going on in their lives. "We decided to go above and beyond to conduct what many called 'feel-good sessions,'" Colonel Merington said. "It was to let people know we cared about them deeply, never forgetting our obligation to take care of the physical and mental health of our people.

We wanted them to know there was a lifeline." Part of the stress came from the fact that the unit closure was sped up due to the hurricane. There are varying opinions of whether this was a good or bad thing. For Col. Steve Arthur, who was 926th FW commander at the time of the BRAC announcement and during Hurricane Katrina, speeding up the closure was a good thing. The colonel knows something about base closures as he was at Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, when it was closed in the early 1990s. "Having been through one before, you know where the pitfalls are," Colonel Arthur said.

"I knew two of the things that would be good about closing sooner rather than later would be the availability of lots of jobs and lots of money. These really helped us out and proved to be an advantage." Once the A-10s left New Orleans for Whiteman AFB, Mo., and Barksdale AFB, La., Colonel Arthur moved on to Whiteman as commander, and Colonel Merington took the reigns in July for the wing's final months. "There will be debates about how fast you should close a unit under BRAC," Colonel Merington said. "From my seat, the faster the better. No lingering death, and no hacking off bits and pieces. The acceleration was a blessing as far as helping our people out was concerned."

Not everyone shares the two commanders' opinions about closing the wing early. "Had we closed a year later, it would have been easier on everybody because so many people's houses were not back in order from Katrina, which made BRAC much harder," said Tech. Sgt. Richard Smith. "Everyone was just getting their lives back in order, and then they had to sell their houses due to BRAC." Sergeant Smith, an air reserve technician and New Orleans native, took a job at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. "I'm glad to have a job," Sergeant Smith said, "but I hate leaving my family and friends and uprooting my kids from their school, friends and family. But we are in the Air Force, and we know situations like this can happen.

We make the best of it. It's not the end of the world, just a major inconvenience." For units on the closure list, AFRC set up several programs, including a BRAC guide, member tracking codes, two clearinghouses, e-mail boxes and an archive, all designed to assist those affected. "For me being a DOD (Department of Defense) civilian employee, placement was good," said Master Sgt. Norman Bailey, a member of the 926th Security Forces Squadron. "I was glad we were the first ones in the system. I applied the first week we could and had a hit in the first week. "As far as my Reserve job was concerned, I wasn't as fortunate. I went through the clearinghouse, which showed me some

hits, but there were some problems. We were told the units had to take us, but they said they didn't."

Another person who experienced some difficulties with the clearinghouse was Chief Master Sgt. Gary Hornosky, 926th FW command chief master sergeant. He ended up retiring in August. "They made it sound like the clearinghouse was the answer, which was not the case for everyone," Chief Hornosky said. "I put my name in the clearinghouse and got no response whatsoever. I don't know if they received it or not. We started having supervisors call other units to help find jobs. That proved to be the most effective way." Despite the problems, Colonel Merington said AFRC should maintain the clearinghouse. "We are the first unit to use the traditional Reservist clearinghouse," Colonel Merington said.

"With all new programs, there are always glitches, but it is a valuable tool, and we need to continue using it." Although it's now closed, the wing's history book includes a stellar record during wartime. Dating back to the DDay invasion of Normandy and continuing through the peacekeeping mission over Bosnia, Desert Storm and now the Global War on Terrorism, the unit has carved out an impressive record. "This wing has always risen to the challenge of war and peacekeeping," Colonel Merington said. "I'd rather go to war with them than anyone else. The Cajun mentality is if there is no danger, let's party; but if there's danger, they are warriors and do their job very well." As the first Reserve fighter unit recalled to active duty during Operation Desert Storm, the Cajuns became the most decorated unit during the war.

"They (active-duty people) were looking at us as if to say, 'What are you doing here?' We proved to them that we belonged," said Master Sgt. Ron Steib, an aircraft hydraulic technician, who recently retired. "All of our training paid off, and we rose to the occasion. "After that it was like a drug to me. Anytime the unit deployed, I needed to go. They were my family." In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the Cajuns were once again called to duty, as the unit deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. "I was a little nervous because everyone's emotions were real high right after 9/11, and I'm thinking, 'Geez, am I up to the task here? Can we go over and do what needs to be done?'" said retired Lt. Col. Neil McAskill, former commander of the 706th Fighter Squadron. The colonel led the Cajuns in Bagram during Operation Enduring Freedom. "The team was so fantastic," he said.

"The guys were so motivated. We flew an enormous amount of sorties and didn't lose any to maintenance or logistics problems. They pretty much put the Air Force A-10 community on track for doing night operations with NVGs (night-vision goggles). For me it was the most special time in my military career, those four months at Bagram." A lasting memory of the Cajuns is on display for the entire world to see. An A-10 Thunderbolt II known as "Chopper Popper" lives on at the Air Force Academy. The "Warthog," flown by then Capt. Bob Swain, now a colonel, was part of the first air-to-air kill during Operation Desert Storm. Colonel Swain, an academy graduate and former 926th FW commander, is currently 22nd Air Force vice commander. And although he has moved on to bigger and better things, he will always be linked to the 926th FW. "I owe a lot to New Orleans," he said.

"I showed up as a captain and learned a lot about core values and got to work with some great personalities there." But it was during Desert Storm in 1991 that the Cajuns made their mark by setting the bar for total-force integration. Colonel Swain's shooting down of an Iraqi helicopter was just *lagniappe*, a Cajun term that means something extra. "It was just another mission, but the first is always a good thing," Colonel Swain said. "That airplane will be there long after we leave the

Earth. It reinforces total force and is a great honor for the unit to have it on display at a great institution where we train future leaders." For all members past and present who have served in the 926th FW, the colonel said the aircraft serves as a reminder that "when called, we served."
2006

The 926th FW can trace its origins to the latter years of World War II, when the 706th Bomb Squadron flew its first bomber air missions Dec. 16, 1943, in B-24 bombers as part of the first Air Force bomber/fighter group. The 706th Troop Carrier Squadron, flying C-119 transport aircraft, moved to Naval Air Station New Orleans from Barksdale Air Force Base, La., in 1961. In 1963, the 706th TCS was assigned to the newly created 926th Troop Carrier Group. In 1967, the unit designation was changed to the 926th Tactical Airlift Group, reflecting broader airlift capabilities. In 1969, the 926th said goodbye to the C-119 and welcomed the C-130 Hercules.

In 1977, the 926th TAG converted to the A-37 Dragonfly fighter aircraft, bringing with the conversion a combat mission and a new designation — the 926th Tactical Fighter Group. The 926th continued to fly the A-37 until 1982 when it converted to the A-10 Thunderbolt II. In 1992, the 926th TFG was redesignated the 926th Fighter Group. Two years later, the unit officially became the 926th Fighter Wing. The 926th converted to the F-16 Fighting Falcon in 1992. In 1995, the Pentagon announced another conversion — the 926th would convert to the A/OA-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft. The conversion was completed and the unit became combat-ready in September 1997.
2006

Air Force Reserve Command activated the 429th Air Combat Training Squadron at Holloman AFB, N.M., as a new remotely piloted aircraft instructional unit late last month, base officials announced. The geographically detached Reserve unit now augments the Active Duty 926th Group at Nellis AFB, Nev., which supplies MQ-1 and MQ-9 flight and crew instructors, in addition to providing test and evaluation to Nellis' Air Force Warfare Center, according to Holloman's Dec. 6 release. "Gaining the 429th ACTS highlights the Reserve Command in the RPA enterprise, and our projected growth into a wing with a dedicated RPA operations group," said 926th Group commander Col. John Breeden. "I'm humbled to lead such a talented group of airmen," said 429th ACTS commander Lt. Col. Brian Moles. The unit first stood-up at Holloman as a detachment of the 301st Fighter Wing at JRB Fort Worth, Tex., in 2010, before it was redesignated as a squadron on Nov. 19. 2013

The 926th Group at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., added a new remotely piloted aircraft squadron in November. The 429th Air Combat Training Squadron was activated during a ceremony Nov. 19. It is a geographically separated unit located at Holloman AFB, N.M. "Gaining the 429th ACTS highlights the Reserve Command's progression in the RPA enterprise and our projected growth into a wing with a dedicated RPA operations group," said Col. John Breeden, 926th GP commander. "We're excited to expand our mission and partnership with additional regular Air Force units across Air Combat Command through total force integration," he said. The 429th ACTS is a classic Reserve associate unit that supports three regular Air Force formal training squadrons with MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper instructor pilots, sensor operators and mission intelligence coordinators. "I'm humbled to lead such a talented group of Airmen," said Lt. Col. Brian Moles, 429th ACTS commander.

“They are experts at what they do and will no doubt continue to forge the way for RPA operations here.” Moles commissioned into the Air Force in 1988. He is a command pilot with more than 3,200 combined flying hours in the MQ-9, T-6, F-15S, F-15E, A-10A, AT-38B, OV-10A, T-38 and T-37 aircraft. Before assuming command of the squadron, Moles led the unit as a detachment. The 429th ACTS has a long history, dating back to 1917 when it was established as the Air Service 41st Aero Squadron at Camp Kelly, Texas, as an infantry and construction unit. It was re-established as a pilot training squadron in 1922, providing basic flight training throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. In 1935 the unit was reassigned to Langley Field, Va., and equipped with Martin B-10 bombers. It later flew B-18 Bolos and B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. During World War II, the squadron was assigned to antisubmarine duty on the Atlantic Coast after the Pearl Harbor attack. It then moved to Italy in 1943 to engage in long-range bombardment of strategic targets in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece. The squadron was deactivated in 1962 and reactivated in 2010 at Holloman AFB as Detachment 1, 44th Fighter Group, under the 301st Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, before transitioning under the 926th GP. 2014

The 926th Fighter Group, Naval Air Station New Orleans, La., is a U.S. Air Force Reserve organization of more than 1,000 personnel training for worldwide deployment in support of U.S. policies. Pilots assigned to the group fly the F-16 C/D Fighting Falcon aircraft. The F-16, manufactured by General Dynamics is a compact multirole fighter designed for air-to-air or air-to-surface combat. Armed with a Vulcan 20mm multi-barrell cannon that can fire 6,000 rounds per minute, the F-16 also carries the AG-65 Maverick missile, the AIM-9 Sidewinder missile and the AAMRAAM air-to-air missile.

Members of the 926th FG come from all over Louisiana and neighboring states, filling a wide variety of Reserve and federal civil service positions. The group is completely self-supporting with not only pilots and mechanics assigned, but also cooks, clerks, plumbers and security police. Through payroll and purchasing, the group contributes more than \$22 million annually to the economy of southeast Louisiana.

The 706th Troop Carrier Squadron, flying C-119 transport aircraft moved to Naval Air Station New Orleans from Barksdale Air Force Base, La., near Shreveport. In January 1963, the 706th TCS was assigned to the 926th Troop Carrier Group, newly created at Naval Air Station New Orleans as part of a Tactical Air Command decision to organize all troop carrier forces, active duty and Reserve, into wing-group-squadron configurations. In 1967, the unit designation was changed to 926th Tactical Airlift Group, reflecting broader airlift capabilities that included transporting equipment and supplies for deployments worldwide. In 1969, the group converted to its second aircraft, the C-130 Hercules. The group was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, for superior performance of the airlift mission from December 1967 to January 1972.

In August 1977, the Air Force announced the conversion of the unit to the A-37 Dragonfly fighter aircraft, bringing with it a new combat mission and unit designation, the 926th Tactical Fighter Group. In April 1978, with the conversion completed, the group achieved combat-ready status with 18 aircraft assigned. The 926th TFG was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award a second

time for the period from April 1978 to January 1980 for successful conversion to the A-37 and superior results on two major inspections. In June 1982, the conversion to the A-10 Thunderbolt II was complete.

In 1986, the 926th TFG participated in the largest overseas Reserve training deployment to date when the group took 12 aircraft and more than 450 people to Denmark for a two-week exercise. The deployment was repeated in 1986 and again, in 1989, when it was expanded to include four weeks and 500 personnel.

In April 1987 and in March 1990, the unit passed Operational Readiness Inspections with flying colors, earning the highest of compliments from the 9th Air Force inspection team, and in December 1989, excelled again during a Unit Effectiveness Inspection also conducted by 9th Air Force.

In October 1987, members of the 926th TFG competed in and took top maintenance team honors in Gunsmoke, a worldwide gunnery competition for Air Force fighter units. The 926th TFG was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit award a third time for the period from April 1988 to March 1990. During that time the unit received superior results on two inspections; the unit's Civil Engineering Squadron was named the Outstanding Air Force Reserve Engineering and Services Squadron for 1989; and the unit completed a successful deployment to its Checkered Flag Training base at Vandel, Denmark.

In September 1990, the 926th TFG began deploying personnel in support of Operation Desert Shield. The 926th Security Police Flight volunteered to deploy to the Middle East and on September 3, the forty-four security police members left for Saudi Arabia. They worked along-side active-duty personnel in guarding Air Force assets against terrorists threats. They returned to the 926th TFG in October 1991.

From October to December 1990, transportation workers from the 926th Mobility Support Flight were activated and sent to backfill at stateside Air Force bases to assist in the mobilization process. On December 29, 1990, approximately 450 members of the 926th TFG were recalled to active duty in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm as the nation's first Air Force Reserve combat unit recalled to active duty. Eighteen pilots and A-10 Thunderbolt H's from the 926th TFG left the Naval Air Station on January 1, 1991 for Saudi Arabia. During the next two weeks the maintenance, operations, and security personnel deployed to the Middle East. This was the second deployment to Saudi Arabia for the 926th Security Police Flight. The unit's flying squadron, the 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron, flew combat missions that resulted in hits against enemy targets, including Scud missile launchers, tanks and an airborne Iraqi helicopter. The helicopter downing by a 706th TFS pilot was the first recorded air-to-air kill by an A-10. The 926th TFG played a very successful role in Operation Desert Storm. The unit returned home in May, 1991 after four and a half months in Saudi Arabia.

In January 1991, after the war began, members of the 926th Civil Engineering Services Squadron were recalled to active duty to backfill at Seymour-Johnson AFB, N.C., and Myrtle Beach AFB, SC.,

where they worked in place of active duty personnel who were deployed to the Middle East. In March, 1991 the 926th Mobility Support Flight recalled five more transportation members for backfilling at stateside Air Force bases assisting in the demobilization of units from Operation Desert Storm. These members remained on active duty until August 1991.

In February 1991, during the unit's deployment for Operation Desert Storm, the Pentagon announced that the unit would convert from the A-10 Thunderbolt to the F-16 Falcon. In February 1992 the unit was redesignated as the 926th Fighter Group. The name change reflected the deactivation of Tactical Air Command which became Air Combat Command. The unit officially converted to the F-16 Falcon October 1, 1992.

The 926th FG is made up of thirteen subordinate organizations, including the 926th Operations Group, 926th Operations Support Flight, 706th Fighter Squadron, 926th Logistics Group, 926th Logistics Support Squadron, 926th Maintenance Squadron, 926th Support Group, 926th Mission Support Flight, 926th Medical Squadron, 926th Communications Flight, 926th Civil Engineering Squadron, 926th Security Police Squadron, and the 926th Services Squadron.

The parent wing of the group is the 301st Fighter Wing, Carswell AFB, in Fort Worth, Texas. The group comes under the wartime combat control of 8th Air Force, headquartered at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., and is part of the Air Combat Command when called to active duty.

The 926th Tactical Fighter Group flew A-10 Thunderbolt II fighter aircraft in approximately 900 combat missions during Operation Desert Storm. Among the unit's achievements was the first air-to-air kill by an A-10, designed for air-to-ground combat. The 926th is based in Belle Chasse and is south Louisiana's only Air Force Reserve unit. It was also the only Air Force Reserve fighter unit to be called up for active duty in Operation Desert Storm and is the only Air Force Reserve fighter unit ever to have been called up for active duty in any situation. This historic call-up affected roughly half of the unit's one thousand members. But those who stayed behind helped make it possible for those who left to perform their duty. Plus, deployed members had the indispensable support of their families, their employers, and the people of south Louisiana.

Among those who were called up between Christmas and New Year's Day, and who left for the desert in early January, were the pilots of the 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the unit's flying squadron. These pilots and A-10s flew front-line missions alongside the active-duty Air Force. It was during one of these missions over Iraq and Kuwait that Capt. Robert R. Swain, while flying with an OA-10 Forward air control (tracker) aircraft from an active duty unit, recorded the A-10's first air-to-air kill when he downed an Iraqi helicopter. Overall, the 926th TFG played a pivotal role in the destruction of Iraqi Scud missile launchers, artillery batteries, armored vehicles and tanks, as well as facilities such as bunkers and command and control centers.

On the ground were hundreds of aircraft mechanics and technicians who kept the A-10s in top flying condition, dozens of operations and intelligence personnel and security forces who kept the planes guarded and secure when they were not in the air. These men and women also worked side-by-side with active-duty forces. Members of the unit spent four and a half months in the

Persian Gulf Region. They arrived in Saudi Arabia in early January and returned home in the middle of May. But security forces were in the Persian Gulf Region one month longer due to their prior deployment to Saudi Arabia during September, 1990.

USAF Unit Histories

Created: 17 Mar 2022

Updated: 5 Apr 2023

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