

2237 AIR RESERVE FLYING CENTER



MISSION

LINEAGE

2237 Air Reserve Flying Center
Discontinued, 19 Dec 1958

STATIONS

New Castle County Airport, Wilmington, DE

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-46
C-119

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Det 1, Niagara Falls Municipal Airport, NY

Soon after activation, personnel of the 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium began to hear and repeat rumors that their wing was to be moved from Reading Municipal Airport to New Castle County Airport at Wilmington, Delaware. The rumors reached the personnel of the 2237th Air Force Reserve Training Center; since the 2237th AFRTC was responsible for supervising the training of the 512th, it would, presumably be moved if the 512th were to be moved. For months, while USAF brass vacillated, refusing either to confirm or deny the rumor, the proposed move was discussed throughout Reading and its environs. Like the populace of any community threatened with the loss of a military installation, the citizenry of Reading were indignantly resentful. Recruiting ceased in the Reading area, and the 512th Wing continued to grow only because it could attract personnel from the Philadelphia region.

There were reasons that seemed, at least to USAF authorities—convincing ones, for moving the two units to Delaware; and in April 1950 the necessary orders were issued. The movement, a permanent change of station was completed before the end of April, completed so smoothly that there was no interruption in the training of the 512th Wing or the functioning of the 2237th AFRTC.

Six weeks after its arrival at Newcastle Air Force Base (the airport had been redesignated on 4 April) the 512th Wing was ordered to two weeks active duty training at Atterbury Air Force Base, Indiana. The experience gained by the pilots of the 512th in airlifting the entire wing personnel to and from the summer encampment in the 2237's own aircraft—C-46 Commandos was extremely valuable. After the encampment came the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. And that brought the individual recall to active duty of 743 members of the wing. Personnel strength of the 512th dropped from 1404 to 661 officers and airmen. To add to the let-down and left-out feeling experienced by the remaining members of the wing came an informal decision by higher headquarters—presumably First Air Force, to which both the 2237th AFRTC and the 512th Wing had been transferred on 1 August 1950 to suspend training in August. Training was resumed in September and recruiting was stepped up.

No sooner had the training program been re-established, than the 2237th AFRTC had to surrender command of the base to the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing, which moved onto Newcastle Air Force Base on 8 September 1950. The loss of command was accompanied by the loss of many of the base's choicest training facilities. Fortunately for the 2237th AFRTC and the 512th Wing, operational requirements of the Air Force in Korea called for the overseas deployment of the 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing. The movement of the 4th Wing to a port of

embarkation, which began on 19 November 1950, was greatly facilitated by the pilots of the 512th Wing and the aircraft of the 2237th Center.

Early in January 1951 members of the 512th Troop Carrier Wing were warned to be prepared for a call to active duty. During February all members of the wing—except those deferred for one reason or another reported for brief, generally three-day, periods of active duty. The time was spent in completing records, taking physical examinations, and being interviewed for possible assignment to Strategic Air Command. After the wing entered active service on 15 March, all members eligible for active duty were sworn in and reassigned to other organizations. On 1 April 1951, the 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium was inactivated.

Effective 26 May 1952, the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium was redesignated Headquarters, 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium. The wing was activated at New Castle County Airport., Wilmington, Delaware (the redesignation to Newcastle Air Force Base, Delaware, had been rescinded, effective 5 March 1951), on 14 June 1952; elements assigned were the 512th Troop Carrier Group, Medium, and the 512th Air Base, Maintenance and Supply, and Medical Groups. As had been the case during the wing's previous period of activity, the training of 512th personnel was conducted under the supervision of the 2237th Air Force Reserve Training Center, redesignated on 23 June 1952 the 2237th Air Force Reserve Combat Training Center. At this time the wing was assigned to the 1st Air Reserve District, First Air Force, Continental Air Command; effective 14 January 1954, it was relieved from assignment to the 1st Air Reserve District and assigned directly to First Air Force. On 18 May 1954 the 512th Medical Group was redesignated 512th Tactical Hospital.

For several years following its second activation the 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium was commonly referred to as the 512th Delaware Valley Wing, a practice which apparently had the tacit approval, though not the official sanction, of higher headquarters. During the period from June 1952 through the first half of 1958 the officers and airmen of the 512th engaged in training on weekends and on 15-day tours of active duty during the summers. The aircraft assigned to the 2237th Air Reserve Flying Center (so redesignated on 20 September 1954)—some 15 or 16 C-46s for training of Reservists, one C-45 for administrative flights, and two C-47s, which were equipped as flying classrooms for the training of navigators—were kept in the air as much as possible, especially during weekends, so that the aircrews of the wing would derive maximum benefits from their training.

To accomplish such aircraft performance, round-the-clock maintenance was frequently required, with the maintenance personnel working three eight-hour shifts. When the C-46s were replaced, in 1957, by C-119 "Flying Boxcars" the difficulties involved in proper maintenance were tremendously increased at New Castle County Airport., The C-119 is a much more complicated airplane than the C-46 and requires proportionately more—and more expert maintenance. Moreover, the C-119s that were assigned to the 2237th ARFC had seen hard service in the Far East and had gone far toward outliving their usefulness. Most of them had not had the benefit of such maintenance as the men of the 2237th had bestowed on their departed and departing C-46s. It sometimes took not days but weeks of hard, steady work to get one of

the C-119's in proper flying condition.

Effective 25 March 1958 the 512th Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, and the 2237th Air Reserve Flying Center were relieved from assignment to First Air Force and assigned to Fourteenth Air Force. On 8 April 1958 a message from the Department of the Air Force alerted the 512th and the 2237th for a permanent change of station. About a month later, Headquarters, Fourteenth Air Force directed the Commander of the 2237th to move the 512th to Willow Grove Naval Air Station, Pennsylvania.

The summer encampment of the 512th Wing, scheduled to be held from 5 through 20 July, was to be at Grenier Air Force Base, New Hampshire. On 5 July 1958 the aircraft of the 2237th ARFC airlifted 512th Troop Carrier Wing personnel to Grenier Air Force Base. During the 15-day training period crews from the 512th transported, in the 2237th ARFC's aircraft, the other equipment assigned to the Center from New Castle County Airport to Willow Grove in anticipation of the Center's move to the Pennsylvania Station. At the end of the summer ramp activities, personnel of the 512th Wing, together with such 2237th ARTS personnel as had been detailed to the camp on TDY and the equipment that had been taken to Grenier for use there in training, were airlifted to Willow Grove. The regular personnel of the 2237th ARFC who had remained at New Castle County Airport to help in moving the Center's equipment were instructed to report at the same time to Willow Grove Naval Station. The change of station was effective, for both Center and Wing, on 20 July 1958.

In April 1958 a new system for the training of Air Reserve units had been initiated. Instead of having the training and logistic support of an organization such as the 512th Troop Carrier Wing provided by active duty personnel of an organization such as the 2237th Air Reserve Flying Center, the new plan, called the Air Reserve Technician program, was to hire members of the unit being trained, as civilians on a full-time basis in sufficient numbers and of the proper skills to carry on the necessary functions administrative, supply, maintenance, and training—of the unit.

These Air Reserve Technicians would appear in uniform, with the rest of the unit's personnel, during monthly weekend training periods and 15-day summer encampments if an emergency required that the unit be called to active duty, they would constitute a hard core of experienced, highly skilled and highly trained officers and airmen who would provide the know-how and leadership that would enable the unit to accomplish its mission successfully. In implementing the Air Reserve Technician plan, the 2237th Air Reserve Flying Center was inactivated on 18 December 1958; all personnel assigned to the 2237th at that time were transferred to Detachment #1, 2523d Instructor Squadron, but detailed to man the 512th Troop Carrier Wing's Air Reserve Technician slots until replacements could be procured.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.