

# 162<sup>nd</sup> FIGHTER WING



## LINEAGE

Reached group status with federal recognition of 162nd FIG 25 May 1958  
162<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Training Group  
162<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Group  
162<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing, 1994

## STATIONS

Tucson, AZ

## ASSIGNMENTS

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

#### Mission Aircraft

F-86A  
F-84  
F-102  
F-100  
A-7D  
A-7K, 1981

#### Support Aircraft

C-47  
C-54  
U-3  
T-29  
C-131  
C-130A  
C-130B  
**C-26A**  
RC-26B  
**C-26B**

## COMMANDERS

Col Donald E. Morris  
Col Wess P. Chambers, 1971  
Col John M. Hartnett, 1981  
Col Glen W. Van Dyke, 1985  
Col Ronald L. Kurth, Oct 1990  
Col Dennis Kerkman, Feb 1994  
Col Joseph I. Mensching, Sep 1994  
Col. Edward P. Maxwell, Oct 2010  
Col Michael T. McGuire, Jan 2011

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Sun-up to Sun-down Alert began in 1959. The Alert Facility consisted of a tent pitched on the site of our present-day Fire Department.

In 1961, the Fighter Group was attached to the Air Defense Command and our Alert commitment expanded to a 24-hour operation.

To meet the requirements of the new mission, remodeling, relocation and construction was necessary. The ramp was enlarged to accommodate additional aircraft. The Engine Shop, Armament, Fire Department and Aerospace Ground Equipment all received additions or new facilities. At the same time, the unit was tasked with mobility exercises, and the Civil Engineering "Prime BEEF" deployable team was created.

Coinciding with the advent of the training mission was the idea that the Air Guard would benefit from a post-graduate course for selected aircrew, which resulted in the creation of the Fighter Weapons School.

The A-7 joined the F-100 the first-ever dual aircraft training mission in the Air National Guard, and the unit, once again, performed admirably. F-100 and A-7 programs continued until 1978, when the number of F-100s in the Guard had diminished to the point where the need for training in the aircraft no longer existed.

The scope of the unit's operational plans and missions became global in October of 1989, when the 162<sup>nd</sup> selected as the site for a pilot training program for the Royal Netherlands Air Force. In December, the first Dutch F-16As arrived in Tucson. This marked the beginning of the first International Pilot Training mission for the Air National Guard, and a new era in training for the 162<sup>nd</sup> which eventually included training crews from Bahrain, Belgium, Indonesia, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, and the Netherlands.

In 1989 the 162 became the first air guard unit to train foreign pilots this assignment was a harbinger of things to come; another Air Force outstanding unit citation in 1990 proved the unit was still on a roll. The last A-7 was retired in 1991 the first time in years the 162 was flying a single type aircraft the F-16. While the A models were being retired from active Air Force use and slowly being phased out by the air National Guard more and more the aircraft found their way overseas. As a result the demand grew for additional foreign military training. The 162 was uniquely qualified for the job unit began training Dutch pilots in the F-16 in 1990. The Republic of Singapore started training in 1992. Singapore was followed by Bahrain in 1993. Portugal's pilots began training in 1994. Thailand signed on in 1994 along with Indonesia and Turkey. Already in 1996 Belgium pilots started training. The 162 expects more foreign nations to come to Tucson as this year progresses.

While the 162<sup>nd</sup> offers a core curriculum for four basic courses the difference needs of the countries involved result in a total of 30 different courses each tailored to the pilots of the individual countries. Basic course takes newly minted pilots and turns them into effective F-16 fighter pilots in seven months a conversion course for experienced fighter pilot last three months. A specialized course for instructor pilots runs 6 weeks the fighter weapons school last for the five months and it includes live fire exercises. At any one time the unit has about 50 students in training.

Having to train pilots from other countries presents its own challenges. Communications is always a concern and notes Col. Joe Mensching who commands the 162<sup>nd</sup>. For most of our foreign pilots English is a second language they still think in their native tongues therefore we must take care and time when necessary to be sure the student understands. The instructors have to have diplomatic abilities at times. It is a very demanding job pilots know when they come here that they're going to be teaching. Not everyone is suited to special challenge of teaching our instructors are mature and they understand the importance of what they do and the unwavering quality they must maintain. The pilots we train here today may someday be flying on the wing of one of our own pilots in some future conflict. We are responsible for ensuring that there up to the task. The instructors bring impressive credentials to the jobs. Over 60% are weapon school graduates or instructors and 80% have combat tours. The average instructor has over 3000 flight hours. About 70% of the instructors have over 1000 hours in the F-16 no surprise that the 162 pilots beat their peers from Luke at the 1994 top-flight competition and that they did it flying original F-16As. The instructor pilot suffers no shortage of stick time for fiscal year 1996; 15,000 flying hours have been allocated. Nearly four times that of typical air National Guard units. In the past this number has been as high as 19,000. All those F-16s flying all those hours require outstanding maintenance and consistent quality. The 162 logistics group delivers the highest sustained sortie rate in the guard

The Air National Guard officially activated the unit as the 162nd Tactical Fighter Training Group in 1969. The unit's new job was producing combat-ready pilots for the F-100 aircraft. They graduated their first students in 1970. Shortly afterward, the unit formed the Air National Guard Fighter Weapons School in Tucson. This school taught Air Guard and Reserve fighter pilots from throughout the country to effectively use advanced tactics and weapons technology.

The unit received its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation for successfully continuing to train F-100 students while completing the most challenging conversion in the unit's history. That tasking was to convert from F-100s to A-7Ds. In the early 1980s the Group also received the A-7K, a two-seat combat-capable training aircraft. This was the first time an aircraft manufacturer produced a new aircraft specifically designed for Air National Guard use.

The unit received its third Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation in the 1970s and began another dimension in training in 1983 when the unit added the A-7 Fighter Weapons School.

During the 1980s the unit received its fourth Outstanding Unit Citation.

In 1985, the unit began a unique dual training mission in the F-16 and A-7.

In 1989 the Netherlands and the United States formally agreed to use the 162nd Fighter Group's first-rate facilities and people to train Dutch fighter pilots in the F-16 aircraft. In 1990 the unit received its fifth Air Force Outstanding Unit Citation. Midsummer 1991 saw the retirement of all its A-7D. Now the unit flies the F-16 C/D and the newer F-16E/F aircraft plus a single C-26A.

In April 1992, the Group's international training mission began a major expansion, training fighter pilots for the Republic of Singapore, followed in 1993 by Bahrain, by Portugal in 1994, and by Thailand, Indonesia and Turkey in 1995. The unit was designated a wing in October of 1995 and the international training mission continued to expand, adding Belgium in 1996 followed by Jordan and Norway in the first half of 1997. Denmark began training here in June 1998, and Japan began training in late 1998. Italy sent their first pilot to Tucson in October 2000, Greece began training here in January 2001 and the United Arab Emirates sent their first students here in August 2001. Oman and Poland both began sending students here in 2004. Other nations who have trained or are currently training in Tucson are Israel, Italy, Chile and Taiwan. Additional nations are currently negotiating training programs with the 162nd FW.

In addition to the training done at the ANG base in Tucson, the Wing conducts training at individual client nations. Mobile Training Teams have conducted classes in numerous countries around the world, most recently in Turkey, the Netherlands, Thailand and Poland. The Thailand Mobile Training Team conducted the unit's premier international training course, known as the Advanced Weapons Course. This program provides "graduate-level" training to assist allied nations in meeting their need for highly trained F-16 pilots.

On June 9, 1997, the wing embarked on a new mission, training international maintenance

technicians on F-16 systems. Jordan sent the first six of nearly 60 technicians to observe and learn 162nd Fighter Wing maintenance techniques so they can emulate what they learn here at their home stations. The training they receive here supplements the technical training they received from the aircraft manufacturer. Italy and the United Arab Emirates have also sent their technicians to Tucson for maintenance training.

From October 1998 until August 1999, the unit conducted a program to convert three former Air Defense units to the general-purpose role. This air-to-ground training program taught current F-16 air defense pilots how to employ the F-16 in the ground attack mission. Air defense units from the Vermont, New Jersey, Texas and California Air National Guard transferred eight F-16Cs/Ds to the 162nd FW. These aircraft were used to train nearly 60 pilots from the three air defense units. Maintenance people from these states also provided maintenance support for these aircraft under 162nd FW supervision.

The September 11 terrorist attacks on our nation brought immediate change to the 162nd Fighter Wing. Within hours of the first attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the 162nd FW placed F-16 aircraft on alert. In the days and weeks that followed, the wing met every requirement of this new air defense mission, dubbed Operation Noble Eagle, with outstanding results. Many members of the wing volunteered to support this new mission and others have stepped up and answered the President's call to "mobilize" in support of this critical mission.

The unit received its sixth Outstanding Unit Award in 2003 for mobilizing more than 300 personnel to support the North American Air Defense Command's Operation Noble Eagle, providing more than 50 personnel to support Central Command's Operation Enduring Freedom, for supporting Joint Forge, Coronet Oak, Coronet Nighthawk and providing personnel to Southern Command and European Command.

On June 27, 2004, the 162nd Fighter Wing and the United Arab Emirates initiated a unique training program. The UAE F-16 Training Program is a dedicated F-16 squadron, the 148th Fighter Squadron. The squadron will operate in the long-term with 13 F-16E/F (Block 60) aircraft. The first aircraft arrived on Sept. 2, 2004.

2005 7 Sep The 162<sup>d</sup> Fighter Wing, Arizona ANG, deployed one Weather Forecaster to NAS New Orleans from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Along with the Homeland Defense mission, the 162nd FW continues its primary mission of International F-16 Pilot Training adding new countries every year. The 162nd Fighter Wing now features new modern buildings, up-to-date equipment and continually updated technology that keeps pace with its rapidly changing roles and missions.

The Air National Guard's 162nd Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., recently changed its name to the 162nd Wing. Brig. Gen. Edward Maxwell, commander of the Arizona Air National Guard, spoke at the wing's rededication ceremony on April 5 at the Tucson International Airport. "The word 'fighter' may be falling out of this wing's name, but the reality is that it will continue to do what it has always done so well: support our country and our forces on the ground against those who want to do us harm," he said. The change, effective April 1,

reflects the inclusion of Davis-Monthan's 214th Reconnaissance Group, which operates remotely piloted aircraft, states the release. 2014

The Arizona Air National Guard launched its first stateside MQ-1 Predator sortie last week from Fort Huachuca, Ariz. The sortie was enabled by the stand up of the unit's new Launch and Recovery Element, according to a unit release. "The LRE completion is a product of more than six years of planning and preparation, and the first flight of an Arizona MQ-1 ... was a great milestone for our wing," said 162nd Wing Commander Col. Phil Purcell. The wing's 214th Reconnaissance Group began flying remote RPA combat missions in theatre from Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., eight years ago. The new LRE will now take on a crew-training role to "prepare airmen from across the country to operate and maintain our nation's RPA assets, and as one of only five ANG LREs in the country, Arizona remains at the forefront of readiness for any federal or state requirement," Purcell added. The unit has logged more than 70,000 combat flying hours to date, and is still awaiting the completion of hangars and support facilities next year. 2014



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Air Force Order of Battle  
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#### Sources

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