

21st SPACE WING



LINEAGE

21st Fighter-Bomber Wing established, 15 Nov 1952
Activated, 1 Jan 1953
Inactivated, 8 Feb 1958
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, 19 May 1958
Activated, 1 Jul 1958
Discontinued and inactivated, 18 Jun 1960
Redesignated 21st Composite Wing and activated, 6 May 1966
Organized, 8 Jul 1966
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1979
Redesignated 21st Wing, 26 Sep 1991
Inactivated, 19 Dec 1991
Redesignated 21st Space Wing, 1 May 1992
Activated, 15 May 1992

STATIONS

George AFB, CA, 1 Jan 1953-28 Nov 1954
Chambley AB, France, 12 Dec 1954-8 Feb 1958
Misawa AB, Japan, 1 Jul 1958-18 Jun 1960
Elmendorf AFB, AK, 8 Jul 1966-19 Dec 1991
Peterson AFB, CO, 15 May 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

Ninth Air Force, 1 Jan 1953
Twelfth Air Force, 12 Dec 1954
United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 Jan-8 Feb 1958
Fifth Air Force, 1 Jul 1958
39th Air Division, 10 Nov 1958-18 Jun 1960

Alaskan Air Command (later, Eleventh Air Force), 6 May 1966-19 Dec 1991
Air Force Space Command, 15 May 1992
Fourteenth Air Force, 20 Sep 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-51, 1953
F-86, 1953-1958
F-84, 1958-1959
F-100, 1958-1960
F/TF-102, 1966-1969
C-130, 1966-1975
C-124, 1969-1971, 1971-1974
H-21, 1969-1970
F-4, 1970-1982
HH-3, 1970-1975
B-57, 1971-1975
C-118, 1971-1975
T-33, 1971-1988
T-39, 1971-1977
VC-118, 1972-1975
EC-118, 1973-1975
CH-3, 1974-1975
EB-57, 1974-1976
C-12, 1977-1984
F-15, 1982-1991
C-21, 1993-1997
Satellites, 1993

COMMANDERS

Col James B. Buck, 1 Jan 1953
Col Robert R. Rowland, 27 Apr 1953
Col Robert N. Baker, 29 Jun 1956-8 Feb 1958
Col Frank J. Collins, 1 Jul 1958
Col William W. Inghutt, 21 Aug 1958
Col Dean Davenport, 28 Sep 1959-18 Jun 1960
None (not manned), 6 May-7 Jul 1966
Col Donald H. Lynch, 8 Jul 1966
Col Charles W. Johnson Jr., Jun 1968
Col Kennieth D. Dunaway, 23 Sep 1969
Col John A. Nelson, 15 Jan 1970
Col Kennieth D. Dunaway, 1 Sep 1970
Col James R. Larkins, 23 Jul 1971
Col James R. Brickel, 9 Aug 1971
Col David T. Stockman, 12 Jul 1972
Col Charles F. Loyd, 4 Jun 1973
Col Frederick C. Eaton, 1 Jul 1974

Col Edward L. Tixier, 1 Jul 1975
Col John T. Wotring, 29 Apr 1977
Col Michael A. Nelson, 16 Apr 1979
Col Jerry D. Cobb, 20 Feb 1981
Col Evan J. Griffith Jr., 22 Apr 1982
Col Wilfred K. Abbott, 16 Apr 1984
Col Pat R. Paxton, 10 Jul 1984
Col William R. Povilus, 19 Mar 1985
Col Stuart L. Alton, 17 Oct 1986
Col Harold S. Storer Jr., 23 Aug 1988
Col Donald J. Creighton, 20 Mar 1990
Col Rodney P. Kelly, 26 Sep-19 Dec 1991
BG Ronald D. Gray, 15 May 1992
BG Donald G. Cook, 1 Sep 1993
BG Gerald F. Perryman Jr., 10 Jan 1995
BG Franklin J. Blaisdell, 7 Jun 1996
BG Jerry M. Drennan, 19 Jun 1998
BG Claude R. Kehler, 22 Aug 2000
BG Duane W. Deal, 15 May 2002
BG Richard E. Webber, 11 Mar 2004
Col. John Shaw

Colonel Stephen N. Whiting
Commander, 21st Space Wing
20 August 2009 - Present

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

8 Jul 1966-1 May 1967

2 May 1967- 1 Jan 1968

2 Jan-31 Dec 1968

1 Jan-31 Dec 1969

1 Jan-31 Dec 1970

1 Jan-31 Dec 1971

1 Jan-31 Dec 1972

1 Jan-31 Dec 1974
1 Jan-31 Dec 1975
1 Jan-31 Dec 1978
1 Jan-31 Dec 1980
1 Jul 1982-30 Jun 1983
1 Oct 1985-31 Dec 1986
1 Jan 1987-31 Dec 1988
1 Oct 1992-30 Sep 1994
1 Oct 1995-30 Sep 1997
1 Oct 1997-30 Sep 1999
1 Jan-31 Dec 1998
1 Jan-31 Dec 1999
1 Jan 2000-31 Aug 2001

Bestowed Honors

Authorized to display honors earned by the 21st Operations Group prior to 1 Jan 1953

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Japan

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Japan, 7 Apr 1945

EMBLEM

Approved on 23 Jul 1957

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

The blue shield represents the vast blue sky--the 21st's area of operations. The upraised sword indicates the strength and readiness of the wing to perform its mission, whether in peace or war. The lightning is symbolic of the heavens beyond, our stormy power and protective Lord. The Air Force blue, red and yellow signify the three fighter squadrons of the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Maintained tactical proficiency and provided air defense augmentation in the United States, Jan 1953-Nov 1954. Became part of the NATO defense forces in Europe, performing special weapons tactical operations, Dec 1954-Jan 1958. Participated in numerous actual and simulated tactical air operations and provided air defense augmentation in Japan and Korea, Jul 1958-Jun 1960. In 1966, assumed air defense responsibility for Alaska and contiguous areas in support of North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) and Aerospace Defense Command (ADCOM) through the Alaskan NORAD Region and ADCOM Region. Provided support for multi-service special operations in arctic regions and participated in numerous search and rescue efforts, 1966-1991. Maintained air defense and alert forces at forward operating bases in Galena and King Salmon, AK, 1977-1991. In 1978-1979 lent humanitarian support and assistance to Vietnamese refugees relocating to Canada. From 1992, provided command management of Air Force Space Command's worldwide network of assigned missile warning, space surveillance, and communications units.

It's a long way from Wheeler Field, Hawaii to Chambley Air Base, France, but the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing has found it a colorful journey filled with a great many changes of scenery, stopovers to gather not a few honors and glories, and in the process, chalking up a few proud "firsts" to their credit.

The historic journey began 21 April 1944 when the 21st Fighter Bomber Group (two engine) was activated at Wheeler Field, Hawaii. Subsequently, it was redesignated as Headquarters, 21st Fighter Group on 15 December 1944. At the time of activation, the three tactical squadrons comprising the group, all equipped with P-39 aircraft, were transferred from other units in the Pacific area; the 46th Squadron from the 15th Fighter Group, the 72nd from the 318th Group and the 531st from the VII Bomber Command. The latter converted from A-24's only a short time before. The 72nd Fighter Squadron had served in Hawaii since 1941, while the 46th and 531st had just returned from combat duty in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands.

Following the cessation of hostilities, the organization remained in the Pacific on occupation duty. On 4 December 1945, the 21st moved to Saipan, remaining there until 16 April 1946, when the units moved once more, this time to Guam. On 10 October 1946, the 21st Fighter Group was inactivated at Guam. Headquarters 21st Fighter Group was re-designated as Headquarters, 21st Fighter Bomber Group, effective 15 November 1952. This authority also redesignated the 72nd and 531st Fighter Squadrons as Fighter Bomber Squadrons, while the 416th Night Fighter Squadron was redesignated as the 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron.

The battle honors and credits earned by the 21st Fighter Bomber Group and its tactical squadrons follows. The history, battle honors and credits of the 21st Fighter Bomber Group have been bestowed upon the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing. The 21st Fighter Bomber Group received Battle Participation Credit for the Air Offensive Japan Campaign and the Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 7 April 1945 in Japan. The 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron received Battle Participation Credit for the Air Offensive Japan Campaign and Eastern Mandates Campaign, and the Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 7 April 1945 in Japan. The 531st Fighter Bomber Squadron received Battle Participation Credit for the Antisubmarine Campaign; Air Offensive Japan Campaign and the Eastern Mandates Campaign, and the Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 7 April 1945 in Japan. The 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron received Battle

Participation Credit for the Southern France Campaign; Po Valley Campaign; North Appennines Campaign; Xaples-Foggia Campaign and the Rome-Amo Campaign, plus the Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 10-11 April 1944 in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations.

The 21st Fighter Bomber Wing was activated on 1 January 1953 at George Air Force Base, California as a component of the Ninth Air Force and Tactical Air Command. The unit, which drew its numerical designation from the old 21st Fighter Group of World War II Pacific Theatre fame, has amassed a record of accomplishment to which the men of the 21st can look with justifiable pride. Aerial operations have spanned the nation several times over; have ranged as far north as Alaska, as far south as the extreme confines of the South American continent and now range the skies over Europe. The men of the 21st may aptly be called the "vagabond airmen".

The first six months of the Wing's neoteric existence were crowded days of constant change. The period witnessed the conversion from conventional F-51 "Mustang" type aircraft to the renowned F-86F "Sabrejet", the sleek, swept-wing jet that hurled back the challenge of communist MIG's in North Korea. Further, the 21st experienced an almost complete turn-over in personnel as a result of the release of Air National Guard personnel who had mainly comprised the 146th Fighter Bomber Wing, predecessor of the 21st at George Air Force Base. Nonetheless, the inherent complexities of these problems were resolved through the stringent efforts of the entire Wing.

The exodus of Air National Guardsmen came to an end in April 1953. In June, the 21st received its complement of Sabres and from that time on the accent in operations shifted from basic indoctrination in the new aircraft to applied tactics in fighter bomber operations.

From this period of trial and error, the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing emerged in the last six months of 1953 ready to participate in the tactical aspects of its training mission. By July, with much of the basic indoctrination in F-86's behind, there began a series of tactical exercises that spanned the nation. From the frozen tundra of Alaska to the shores of Florida; from the Kill Devil Hills of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina to New York, 21st Sabrejets ranged, and from the far-flung exercises a wealth of experience was gained.

The first such move came in mid-June 1953, when an entire squadron moved to Auxiliary Field No. 2, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida for gunnery training. The 21st's 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron, first tactical squadron to be equipped with Sabre-jets, was selected for the move. Included in the agenda at the Florida base was an Indoctrination Program for United States Military Academy Cadets. In July, the 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron followed to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida while in August the 531st made the expansive journey.

Meanwhile, on 3 July 1953, the 21st performed its first standard firepower demonstration utilizing the new Sabres at Fort Lewis, Washington. The demonstration was the first on the United States' west coast in which F-86F aircraft were used, and according to all available information, it was believed to have been the first in the entire nation.

Then on 10 July 1953, events were set in motion that heralded another first for the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing and its tactical elements. The Wing was notified that it had been selected to participate in an Arctic Indoctrination Tour to test the capability for self-sufficient squadron

operation in the far north. Never before had Sabrejets participate in Arctic maneuvers within the Alaskan Theatre.

This operation is now history: from the myriad of preparations necessary for so large an undertaking to the departure of the squadrons from George Air Force Base; their arrival and operations at Eileson Air Force Base, Alaska, the ultimate destination; and their return. Again, the 72nd was the first to deploy, followed in order by the 416th and 531st.

Meanwhile, the 21st continued to give aerial performances ranging from New York to the State of Washington. The final operation of the Wing's first year of existence occurred on 17 December 1953. Appropriately enough, the mission was to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Powered Flight and to demonstrate Air Force progress in aviation. The scene of the final operation of 1953 was near the coast of North Carolina; the focal point was a marble column atop the highest of the Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk, the birthplace of aviation. It was here in 1903 that the Wright Brothers launched the first successful aerial flight.

The 21st Fighter Bomber Wing greeted the year of 1954 with even more extensive operations on its immediate agenda. In mid-January five Sabre-jets departed George Air Force Base on the first leg of an exercise that was to span Central and South America, penetrating as far south as Argentina and Chile. This was Project "Willtour". Other commands furnished various types of USAF aircraft for the tour.

The mission of "Willtour" was to conduct a USAF goodwill tour and training exercise to Central, Caribbean and South American countries for the purpose of demonstrating modern USAF aircraft and enhancing the position of the United States in the interest of hemispheric solidarity. The aircraft performed at eleven major cities in the countries to the south and when they landed at McDill Air Force Base, Florida a month later, they had flown approximately 11,400 miles through foreign skies.

Prior to this time, on 4 January 1954, the "vagabond men" of the 21st packed their gear and once more headed for Eglin Air Force Base, Florida to participate in gunnery training. The detachment consisted of a large portion of the Fighter Bomber Group and tactical squadron strength. The second operation lasted until 31 January 1954.

On 10 April 1954, the 21st Wing commenced what was to be its final major operation within the United States for some time to come. Operations "Boxkite" was designed to test the capability for moving, on short notice, the entire tactical group to a forward base and sustained operations from that base for a period of thirty days. The operations tested an original concept of tactical air development and was the first such exercise for a unit of the United States Air Force of comparable size. Once more the 21st led the way.

As mentioned, this was to be the last major operation for the 21st in the United States within the foreseeable future. On 22 June 1954, in a simultaneous news release all over the nation, the Secretary of the Air Force announced that the Wing would move to Chambley, France in the fall of 1954. Word was received later that the tentative readiness date was 15 November 1954.

Immediately the planning was begun for the scheduled deployment. The operational commitments of the 21st Wing were curtailed to a large extent due to the large-scale packing and crating and the necessary qualification of pilots prior to the movement overseas.

To facilitate the move to Europe, the Wing was divided into four elements. These elements were the Advance Party, whose job it was to prepare the base for the arrival of the Wing, the Main Echelon, which was made up of all personnel not needed for the direct maintenance of the aircraft; the Flight and Enroute Support Echelon, consisting of F-86F aircraft and crews and maintenance personnel; and the Rear Air Echelon, whose duty it was to clear the accounts of the Wing at George Air Force Base.

The Advance Party was flown to New York and from there was transported to Europe by boat, arriving at Chambley Air Base, France on 16 November 1954. The Main Echelon of the Wing left George Air Force Base by trains on 26 and 27 November, arrived at Houston, Texas on 29 November and left the United States on the USNS General LeRoy Eltinge the same day. After fourteen days on the water the ship docked at La Pallice on the western coast of France and the men boarded yet another train bound for their new home at Chambley. The Main Echelon arrived on 13 December 1954.

The Flight and Enroute Support Echelons left George Air Force Base on 12 December 1954, again led by the 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron. The En-route Maintenance men were flown in three giant C-124 aircraft of the 18th Air Force. The 416th and 531st Fighter Bomber Squadrons followed on 13 and 14 December 1954. The route followed by the Sabres on their long flight was as follows: Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico, to Alexandria Air Force Base, Louisiana, to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to Loring Air Force Base, Maine, to Goose Bay, Labrador, to Narsarssuak, Greenland, to Keflavik, Iceland, to Preswick, Scotland thence to Chaumont Air Base, France. The 21st's Sabres were led on their long flight across the Atlantic by the Wing Commander, Colonel Robert R. Rowland. The Wing had successfully completed its largest operational assignment, that of deploying to an overseas destination.

Upon arrival of the tactical units in Europe the base at Chambley was not suitable for operations and therefore the squadrons were temporarily stationed at other bases in France. The 416th and 531st operated from Toul-Rosieres Air Base and the 72nd staged out of Chateauroux Air Base. This situation existed for the first half of 1955 until the airfield was prepared for the F-86F's.

The pilots immediately began their theatre indoctrination with a series of close support missions for the Army units in Europe. Upon completion of this the tactical squadrons went to Wheelus Field, Tripoli, for the first of their required semi-annual gunnery training on the North African continent. The period of the training was from 7 May to 11 June 1956.

Immediately upon return of the aircraft from Africa the men of the 21st took part in a full-scale NATO maneuver called " Exercise Carte Blanche". The squadrons were dispersed during the maneuver and were called upon for close air support sorties and air cover.

Following this the gunnery team representing the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing won the USAFE

Special Weapons Meet at Wheelus Field, Tripoli and went on to represent USAFE in the USAF Gunnery Meet at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. In this latter meet the 21st team came in a close second in their specialty.

Again in September and October of 1955 the tactical squadrons returned to Wheelus Field, North Africa for their semi-annual training. This forty-five day period, commencing 6 September, proved to be a very beneficial one, in that the crews were able to maintain their proficiency and break in new pilots.

On 12 June 1956 Chambley was officially dedicated and became one of the key bases in the NATO chain.

Colonel Robert N. Baker replaced Colonel Robert R. Rowland as Wing Commander on 29 June 1956. Colonel Rowland was reassigned to Headquarters Twelfth Air Force, Ramstein Air Base, Germany as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

The remainder of the year 1956 was spent in flying close support missions for Army units stationed in Germany and France and in maintaining pilot readiness in the F-86F aircraft.

The year 1957 saw ever increasing numbers of new faces appearing within the entire 21st Fighter Bomber Wing as "old-timers" found their tours overseas completed and were returning to the land of the "Round Door Knob".

As the future holds promise of great things for those who will remain in Europe, a vital part of NATO Defense Forces, the Wing can reminisce over its travels, for it has come a long, long way. It can be ever mindful of the great role it has played in the skyward defense of its country, and can look ahead to an even more challenging journey into the future.

The 21st Space Wing, commanded by Col. Jay W. Raymond and headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., is the Air Force's only organization providing missile warning and space control to unified commanders and combat forces worldwide.

Our Mission: Conduct world class space superiority operations and provide unsurpassed installation support and protection while deploying Warrior Airmen.

Our Vision: Strength and Preparedness to Save the Nation.

We are located in 5 countries, crossing 9 time zones, consisting of 6 groups, a director of staff, 42 units at 27 locations. We literally cover the world with our operations.

The 21 SW provides missile warning and space control to North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Strategic Command through a network of command and control units and ground based sensors operated by geographically separated units around the world.

THE WING

Provides early warning of strategic and theater ballistic missile attacks and foreign space launches.

More than 9,000 government and contractor personnel detect, track and catalog more than 16,000 cataloged man-made objects in space, from those in near-Earth orbit to objects up to 22,300 miles above the earth's surface

Explores counterspace warfighting technologies in the field

Hosts HQ NORAD, HQ NORTHCOM, HQ Air Force Space Command and the 302nd Airlift Wing

Operates and supports Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station; Thule Air Base, Greenland; and Clear AFS, Alaska, and Cape Cod AFS, Mass.

Provides community support to the 50th Space Wing, Schriever AFB, Colo

Provides community support to the Colorado Springs and the Denver areas.

Members of the 21 SW operate and maintain a complex system of U.S. and foreign-based radars that detect and track ballistic missile launches, launches of new space systems, and provide data on foreign ballistic missile events.

Today, ballistic missile warning is critically important to U.S. military forces. At least 20 nations currently have nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, and the technology to deliver them over long distances. According to intelligence estimates, during the next 10 years, several Third World countries will develop the technology and capability to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles at the United States.

The 21st Operations Group manages all operation units in the 21st Space Wing.

The wing' s ground-based radars are comprised of a sea-launched ballistic missile, or SLBM, warning system--PAVE PAWS; a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, or BMEWS; and a Perimeter Attack Radar Characterization System, or PARCS.

SLBM warning units are the 6th SWS, Cape Cod AFS, Mass., and the 7th SWS, Beale AFB, Calif. Their mission is mainly to watch America's coasts for incoming sea-launched or intercontinental ballistic missiles, and warn NORAD/NORTHCOM and the POTOS. The wing's two BMEWS radar units are the 12th SWS, Thule AB, and the 13th SWS at Clear AFS. The 21st SW also has a detachment at RAF Fylingdales, U.K., to coordinate cooperative missile warning and space surveillance with RAF counterparts.

The wing's PARCS unit is the 10th SWS, Cavalier AFS, N.D.

Space surveillance is a critical element of the space control mission and will be vitally important to support future theater missile operations and assured availability of U.S. space forces. DESERT STORM proved once again that whoever controls the high ground has definite military advantage.

In addition to its wartime missions, space surveillance is important during peacetime. As part of the space surveillance mission, the wing operates surveillance units. More than 9,500 manmade objects in orbit around the earth, ranging in size from a baseball to the Mir Space Station, are regularly tracked. Knowing the orbits of those objects is essential to prevent collisions when a new satellite is launched.

The 20th Space Control Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla., provides dedicated active radar space surveillance. In addition, other collateral and contributing missile warning and research radars are used to support the surveillance mission.

The 4th SPCS, at Holloman AFB, N.M., responsible for delivering defensive and offensive counterspace and space situational awareness, as appropriate, to rapidly achieve flexible and versatile effects in support of global and theater campaigns.

The wing also controls and operates optical space tracking telescope systems under the 21st Operations Group. The Ground-Based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance system, or GEODSS, is operated by Detachment 1, Socorro, N.M.; Detachment 2, Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territories; and Detachment 3, Maui, Hawaii. The Moron Optical Surveillance System is operated by Detachment 4, Moron, Spain.

The 21st Space Wing's operations center is responsible for 16 space weapons systems in 42 units at 27 locations in 5 countries. As the Installation Control Center, it is the single, integrated command and control node for Peterson Air Force Base. The center houses the Emergency Communications Center and is responsible for emergency dispatch of fire and security forces. The center also provides resources and training for the Crisis Action Team, and manages the Status of Resources and Training System for the entire wing. Additionally, the center responds to higher headquarter taskings and assumes tactical control of forces when directed.

WELCOME TO THE 21st SPACE WINGThe 21st Space Wing, commanded by 1. Brig Gen Richard E. Webber and headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, CO, is the Air Force's only organization providing missile warning and space control to unified commanders and combat forces worldwide.

Our Mission: Provide combat capabilities through missile warning, space control, and expeditionary forces of globally-based units.

Our Vision: Total and combined force professionals providing unsurpassed missile warning, space control, and expeditionary forces to combatant commanders worldwide.

We are located in 4 countries, crossing 9 time zones, consisting of 5 groups, a director of staff, 41 units at 26 locations. We literally cover the world with our operations.

The 21 SW provides missile warning and space control to North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Strategic Command through a network of command and control units and ground and space-based sensors operated by geographically separated units around the world.

THE WING ...

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MISSILE WARNING Defense Support Program (DSP) satellites and their associated ground systems and personnel support the space-based early warning system. As the first system to detect missile launches, DSP satellites are critical sensors in the United States' and Canada's early warning system. DSP squadrons send crucial missile and space launch detection and nuclear detonation reports to NORAD and U.S. Strategic Command command centers at Cheyenne Mountain AFS.

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MISSILE WARNING (space based, ground based)

The 21 OG provides space-based missile warning data, serving as a focal point for transition to the Space-Based Infrared Satellite system, and providing space communication data and relay.

The wing's ground-based radars are comprised of a sea-launched ballistic missile, or SLBM, warning system—PAVE PAWS; a Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, or BMEWS; and a Perimeter Attack Radar Characterization System, or PARCS.

Mission: Conduct world class space superiority operations and provide unsurpassed installation support and protection while deploying Warrior Airmen.

Responsibilities:

The 21st Space Wing, headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., provides worldwide missile warning and space control to unified commanders and combat forces worldwide.

The wing provides missile warning and space control to North American Aerospace Defense Command, U.S. Northern Command, and U.S. Strategic Command through a network of ground-based sensors operated by geographically separated units around the world.

The 21st SW units also run the global space surveillance network that detects, tracks and

catalogs all man-made objects in space.

The wing provides early warning of strategic and theater ballistic missile attacks and foreign space launches.

More than 9,000 government and contractor personnel detect, track and catalog more than 15,000 cataloged man-made objects in space.

The 21st SW manages and controls 43 units at 27 locations in the United States and around the world. It operates and supports Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Colo.; Thule Air Base, Greenland; Clear AFS, Alaska, Cape Cod Air Force Station, Mass., and Cavalier AS, N.D.

21st Fighter Bomber Wing

It's a long way from Wheeler Field, Hawaii to Chambley Air Base, France, but the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing has found it a colorful journey filled with a great many changes of scenery, stopovers to gather not a few honors and glories, and in the process, chalking up a few proud "firsts" to their credit.

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From this period of trial and error, the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing emerged in the last six months of 1953 ready to participate in the tactical aspects of its training mission. By July, with much of the basic indoctrination in F-86's behind, there began a series of tactical exercises that spanned the nation. From the frozen tundra of Alaska to the shores of Florida; from the Kill Devil Hills of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina to New York, 21st Sabrejets ranged, and from the far-flung exercises a wealth of experience was gained.

The first such move came in mid-June 1953, when an entire squadron moved to Auxiliary Field No. 2, Eglin Air Force Base, Florida for gunnery training. The 21st's 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron, first tactical squadron to be equipped with Sabre-jets, was selected for the move. Included in the agenda at the Florida base was an Indoctrination Program for United States Military Academy Cadets. In July, the 416th Fighter Bomber Squadron followed to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida while in August the 531st made the expansive journey.

Meanwhile, on 3 July 1953, the 21st performed its first standard firepower demonstration utilizing the new Sabres at Fort Lewis, Washington. The demonstration was the first on the United States' west coast in which F-86F aircraft were used, and according to all available information, it was believed to have been the first in the entire nation.

Then on 10 July 1953, events were set in motion that heralded another first for the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing and its tactical elements. The Wing was notified that it had been selected to

participate in an Arctic Indoctrination Tour to test the capability for self-sufficient squadron operation in the

far north. Never before had Sabrejets of the United States Air Force participated in Arctic maneuvers within the Alaskan Theatre.

This operation is now history; from the myriad of preparations necessary for so large an undertaking to the departure of the squadrons from George Air Force Base; their arrival and operations at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, the ultimate destination; and their return. Again, the 72nd was the first to deploy, followed in order by the 416th and 531st.

Meanwhile, the 21st continued to give aerial performances ranging from New York to the State of Washington. The final operation of the Wing's first year of existence occurred on 17 December 1953. Appropriately enough, the mission was to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Powered Flight and to demonstrate Air Force progress in aviation. The scene of the final operation of 1953 was near the coast of North Carolina; the focal point was a marble column atop the highest of the Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk, the birthplace of aviation. It was here in 1903 that the Wright Brothers launched the first successful aerial flight.

The 21st Fighter Bomber Wing greeted the year of 1954 with even more extensive operations on its immediate agenda. In mid-January five Sabrejets departed George Air Force Base on the first leg of an exercise that was to span Central and South America, penetrating as far south as Argentina and Chile. This was Project "Willtour". Other commands furnished various types of USAF aircraft for the tour.

The mission of "Willtour" was to conduct a USAF goodwill tour and training exercise to Central, Caribbean and South American countries for the purpose of demonstrating modern USAF aircraft and enhancing the position of the United States in the interest of hemispheric solidarity. The aircraft performed at eleven major cities in the countries to the south and when they landed at McDill Air Force Base, Florida a month later, they had flown approximately 11,400 miles through foreign skies.

Prior to this time, on 4 January 1954, the "vagabond men" of the 21st packed their gear and once more headed for Eglin Air Force Base, Florida to participate in gunnery training. The detachment consisted of a large portion of the Fighter Bomber Group and tactical squadron strength. The second operation lasted until 31 January 1954.

On 10 April 1954, the 21st Wing commenced what was to be its final major operation within the United States for some time to come. Operations "Boxkite" was designed to test the capability for moving, on short notice, the entire tactical group to a forward base and sustained operations from that base for a period of thirty days. The operations tested an original concept of tactical air development and was the first such exercise for a unit of the United States Air Force of comparable size. Once more the 21st led the way.

As mentioned, this was to be the last major operation for the 21st in the United States within the foreseeable future. On 22 June 1954, in a simultaneous news release all over the nation, the Secretary of the Air Force announced that the Wing would move to Chambley, France in the fall of 1954. Word was received later that the tentative readiness date was 15 November 1954.

Immediately the planning was begun for the scheduled deployment. The operational commitments of the 21st Wing were curtailed to a large extent due to the large-scale packing and crating and the necessary qualification of pilots prior to the movement overseas.

To facilitate the move to Europe, the Wing was divided into four elements. These elements were the Advance Party, whose job it was to prepare the base for the arrival of the Wing, the Main Echelon, which was made up of all personnel not needed for the direct maintenance of the aircraft; the Flight and Enroute Support Echelon, consisting of F-86F aircraft and crews and maintenance personnel; and the Rear Air Echelon, whose duty it was to clear the accounts of the Wing at George Air Force Base.

The Advance Party was flown to New York and from there was transported to Europe by boat, arriving at Chambley Air Base, France on 16 November 1954. The Main Echelon of the Wing left George Air Force Base by trains on 26 and 27 November, arrived at Houston, Texas on 29 November and left the United States on the USNS General LeRoy Eltinge the same day. After fourteen days on the water the ship docked at La Pallice on the western coast of France and the men boarded yet another train bound for their new home at Chambley. The Main Echelon arrived on 13 December 1954.

The Flight and Enroute Support Echelons left George Air Force Base on 12 December 1954, again led by the 72nd Fighter Bomber Squadron. The En-route Maintenance men were flown in three giant C-124 aircraft of the 18th Air Force. The 416th and 531st Fighter Bomber Squadrons followed on 13 and 14 December 1954. The route followed by the Sabres on their long flight was as follows: Clovis Air Force Base, New Mexico, to Alexandria Air Force Base, Louisiana, to Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to Loring Air Force Base, Maine, to Goose Bay, Labrador, to Narsarssuak, Greenland, to Keflavik, Iceland, to Preswick, Scotland thence to Chaumont Air Base, France. The 21st's Sabres were led on their long flight across the Atlantic by the Wing Commander, Colonel Robert R. Rowland. The Wing had successfully completed its largest operational assignment, that of deploying to an overseas destination.

Upon arrival of the tactical units in Europe the base at Chambley was not suitable for operations and therefore the squadrons were temporarily stationed at other bases in France. The 416th and 531st operated from Toul-Rosieres Air Base and the 72nd staged out of Chateauroux Air Base. This situation existed for the first half of 1955 until the airfield was prepared for the F-86F's.

The pilots immediately began their theatre indoctrination with a series of close support missions for the Army units in Europe. Upon completion of this the tactical squadrons went to Wheelus Field, Tripoli, for the first of their required semi-annual gunnery training on the North African continent. The period of the training was from 7 May to 11 June 1956.

Immediately upon return of the aircraft from Africa the men of the 21st took part in a full-scale NATO maneuver called " Exercise Carte Blanche". The squadrons were dispersed during the maneuver and were called upon for close air support sorties and air cover.

Following this the gunnery team representing the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing won the USAFE Special Weapons Meet at Wheelus Field, Tripoli and went on to represent USAFE in the USAF Gunnery Meet at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. In this latter meet the 21st team came in a close second in their specialty.

Again in September and October of 1955 the tactical squadrons returned to Wheelus Field, North Africa for their semi-annual training. This forty-five day period, commencing 6 September, proved to be a very beneficial one, in that the crews were able to maintain their proficiency and break in new pilots.

Colonel Robert N. Baker replaced Colonel Robert R. Rowland as Wing Commander on 29 June 1956. Colonel Rowland was reassigned to Headquarters Twelfth Air Force, Ramstein Air Base, Germany as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

The remainder of the year 1956 was spent in flying close support missions for Army units stationed in Germany and France and in maintaining pilot readiness in the F-86F aircraft.

The year 1957 saw ever increasing numbers of new faces appearing within the entire 21st Fighter Bomber Wing as "old-timers" found their tours overseas completed and were returning to the land of the "Round Door Knob".

As the future holds promise of great things for those who will remain in Europe, a vital part of NATO Defense Forces, the Wing can reminisce over its travels, for it has come a long, long way. It can be ever mindful of the great role it has played in the skyward defense of its country, and can look ahead to an even more challenging journey into the future

The 21st Composite Wing was activated at Elmendorf AFB on 8 July 1966. It replaced the 5040th Air Base Wing, which was inactivated. All the AAC flying units were assigned to the wing's control. This provided AAC with a much needed intermediate headquarters. However, the Headquarters, AAC, continued to retain control of the aircraft control and warning sites until 15 November 1977, when the 531st Aircraft Control and Warning Group was activated and the squadrons were assigned directly to its control. The following types of aircraft were flown by the 21st Composite Wing at the time of activation: 17th Troop Carrier Squadron, C-130Ds and C-130D-6s; 317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, F-102As, TF-102As, EB-57Es, and T-33As; and the 21st Operations Squadron, C-119As, C-123Bs, EC-54Ds, H-21Bs and U-6As. It was a mixed bag of aircraft, which justified the composite designation and kept the wing's four maintenance squadrons busy.

Operations: Maintained tactical proficiency and provided air defense augmentation in the United States, Jan 1953-Nov 1954. Became part of the NATO defense forces in Europe, performing special weapons tactical operations, Dec 1954-Jan 1958. Participated in numerous actual and simulated tactical air operations and provided air defense augmentation in Japan and Korea, Jul 1958-Jun 1960. In 1966, assumed air defense responsibility for Alaska and contiguous areas in support of North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) and Aerospace Defense Command (ADCOM) through the Alaskan NORAD Region and ADCOM Region. Provided support for multi-service special operations in arctic regions and participated in numerous search and rescue

efforts, 1966-1991. Maintained air defense and alert forces at forward operating bases in Galena and King Salmon, AK, 1977-1991. In 1978-1979 lent humanitarian support and assistance to Vietnamese refugees relocating to Canada. Provided command management of Air Force Space

21st Tactical Fighter Wing (PACAF)

Activated in Hawaii on 21 April 1944, the 21 st Fighter Group was assigned to the Seventh Air Force and served as part of the defense force for the Hawaiian Islands.

The group was first equipped with the P-39, then the P-38 and, in January of 1945 re-equipped with P-51 aircraft. Wartime operations included bombing and strafing airfields on Hahaione and escorting B-29s to Japan. The Unit was assigned to the Twentieth Air Force during the Summer of 1945 and, in the Summer of 1946, re-equipped with P-47s. The unit was deactivated on the island of Guam on 10 October 1946.

When reactivated on 1 January 1953, the 21st Fighter Bomber Group was assigned to the Tactical Air Command and equipped with F-51s before re-equipping with the F-86F a few months later.

At this time, the group was at George Air Base, California; however, by the end of 1954 the squadrons were divided and moved to Toul-Rosieres and Chateauroux, France. Later they rejoined at Chambley Air Base, France and, from mid-1955, were assigned to USAFE. At this time the group consisted of three squadrons (the 72nd, 416th and 531st), all operating the F-86F. During late 1957, the 21st FBS was deactivated.

The 72nd Squadron was moved to Clark Air Base, The Philippines and assigned to the 6200th Air Base Wing.

The remaining two squadrons of the 21st Wing, the 416th and 531st were now based at Misawa, Japan and assigned to PACAF, operating F-100D/Fs.

The F-100s carried very striking markings. The 416th TFS carried two large Blue alars (bordered in White) on the tail. Three nose bands of parallel width were painted behind the intake with the first and last band painted in Blue (bordered in White). The center band varied in color with Red, Light Blue or White known to have been used. It is thought that when first operating the F-100s each squadron was divided into flights, however, for the majority of the time the F-100 was in service the center band was White. The two outer Blue bands contained three White stars on the first band and four on the last band, on each side of the nose.

This F-100D (55-3807) was named THE GREEN HORNET and was assigned to the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 21 st Tactical Fighter Wing. The nose bands were dark Blue with White stars while the center band was Light Blue. The tail markings were Dark Blue.

The 531 st Squadron color was Red and in the same design as that of the 416th Squadron. The 531st Squadron Commander's aircraft (55-2879) also carried three Red fuselage bands (bordered in White) and the name "Little John" in Red and White on a Black outlined scroll. By 1962, the individual squadron markings became wing markings and all aircraft carried the same colors. The nose bands were now changed to Red, White, and Blue with the appropriate number of White stars and the twin alars were now Red (upper) and Blue with White borders. F-100D (55-2879) was assigned to the 531st Squadron Commander and, although decorated in the wing scheme, it retained the Red fuselage stripes but with the name changed to Schatze II in Red and Blue.

By 1964, most if not all the colorful markings had been removed and the aircraft now carried the PACAF insignia on the fin.

Known Aircraft:

416th TFS: 55-3608, 58-1223(F), 58-1227(F) and 58-1229(F) 531st TFS: 55-2870, 55-2879 (CO), 55-3550, 55-3577, 55-3620, 55-3782, 55-3809, 55-3811 and 55-3812.

An F-1 OOD (56-3345) of the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron taxis out for a mission. The aircraft is assigned to a different flight and carries a Red center band on the nose.

SCHATZEII was flown by the commander of the 531 st Tactical Fighter Squadron and carries the Red, White and Blue colors of the 21 st Tactical Fighter Wing during 1962. The three Red bands around the center fuselage identified the aircraft as a squadron commander's mount.

The 21st Composite Wing was activated at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, on 8 June 1966 and maintained control over several air defense associated units flying the C-130, F-102 Delta Dagger and T-33A Shooting Star. The F-4's association with the 21st CW began with the reassignment of the 43rd TFS from the 15th TFW at Langley AFB, Virginia, on 23 June 1970 with 'FC'-tailcoded F-4Es. The F-4E assumed the air defense role from the F-102 Delta Dagger, and this role was carried out from a number of forward operating locations including Eielson, King Salmon and Galena. On 1 January 1980, the 18th TFS, also flying the F-4E, was assigned to the 21st CW upon the inactivation of the 343rd TFG. The 21st CW redesignated as the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing on 1 October 1979, and the 43rd TFS began conversion to the F-15 Eagle in March 1982, completing in October 1982.

More cuts came. The number F102s assigned to the 317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron were reduced from 34 to 18. The Aerospace Defense Command assumed much of the air defense mission with rotational F-106s from 1963 to 1970. The 317th was inactivated on 31 December 1969. It was replaced by the 45rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, which arrived in June 1970 with 18 F-4Es. The squadron was assigned to the 21st Composite Wing, activated 8 July 1966. The 21st was redesignated a tactical fighter wing on 1 October 1979.

The Alaskan Command was reestablished at Elmendorf in 1989 as subunified joint service command under the Pacific Command in recognition of Alaska's military importance in the Pacific region. That importance was further recognized when the F-15E Strike Eagle equipped 90th Fighter Squadron moved to Elmendorf Air Force Base from Clark Air Base in the Philippines in May 1991. The Pacific Regional Medical Center moved from Clark to Elmendorf and construction of a new hospital began in 1993. The early 1990s also saw major organizational changes and an expansion of Elmendorf's importance. In 1991, the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing was reorganized as an objective wing and all the major tenant units on Elmendorf were placed under it. The 21st Wing inactivated on 19 December 1991 when the 3rd Wing was reassigned from Clark Air Base to Elmendorf Air Force Base. The "Grim Reaper" 3rd Wing constitutes the

longest serving and most distinguished wing in the Air Force (its progenitor was activated on 1 July 1919).

The United States Air Force was established in 1947, the year following the inactivation of the old 21st Fighter Group. The new standard organizational unit became the “wing” instead of the previous organizational standard, the “group.” As a matter of official policy, the Air Force began preserving the lineage and honors of the distinguished air groups of World War Two by granting their numerical designations to wings activating in the post-war period. Thus, when the 21st took to the air again to defend the high ground the wing assumed the lineage and honors of the 21st Fighter Group which had earned signal fame in the Pacific. The new unit, the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing, activated on 1 January 1953 as a component of Ninth Air Force, Tactical Air Command, at George AFB, California. The wing comprised three fighter-bomber squadrons: the 72d, 416th, and 531st. The 72d and 531st previously had been components of the 21st Fighter Group.

During its first six months, the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing upgraded from the F-51 to the F-86F “Sabrejet,” which had become famous for its prowess in the Korean War. Throughout 1953 and into the first months of 1954, the 21st participated in a series of tactical exercises through which the unit obtained operational readiness.

The wing conducted the first of these exercises in Alaska in September and October of 1953 when the flying squadrons, in tandem, rotated through a special two-week arctic indoctrination program at Eielson AFB. Next, the 21st sent six of its F-86s to participate in Project Willtour, an 11,000 mile goodwill and training tour of twelve Central, Caribbean, and South American countries. The wing continued its exercises in Operation BOXKITE, held throughout April and into May of 1954 at North Field, South Carolina. BOXKITE tested a new operational concept: the ability of a tactical wing to deploy to a forward base and sustain combat operations over a thirty-day period. In response, the 21st flew 3,000 sorties.

BOXKITE was the last significant stateside exercise, for on 22 June 1954, the Secretary of the Air Force announced that the 21st would be relocating to Chambley, France, as part of Twelfth Air Force and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) which had taken a defensive stance against the Warsaw Pact headed by the Soviet Union. Chambley Air Base was located about ten miles west of the French city of Metz, and just south of the road leading to Verdun near France’s strategic northeastern border with Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany.

The wing’s deployment from George AFB, California, to France had to be carried out in stages. Four echelons of wing personnel variously traveled by train, ship, and air to reach their destination between November 1954 and January 1955. The air squadrons stopped to refuel across the United States and in Labrador, Greenland, Iceland, and Scotland in route. Unfortunately, the new base could not be opened officially until June 1956 because engineers had to upgrade the modest facilities at Chambley.

During the interim period, the three flying components of the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing, the 72d, 416th and 531st Fighter-Bomber Squadrons, staged out of alternate airfields in the French countryside. The squadrons carried out close air support training missions with the Army, then took first place at the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) “Gunnery Meet” at Wheelus Field in Libya, North Africa. The fighter-bombers next participated in the atomic warfare exercise “Carte Blanche,” and went on to take an overall second place in the Nellis AFB, Nevada “Gunnery Meet” in 1956. Moreover, they won the USAFE “Award for Tactical Proficiency” for the January-June period of 1957.

While at Chambley, the 21st received approval for its unit emblem which the 21st Space Wing wears today. Our motto, “Strength and Preparedness,” originally was in Latin - “Fortitudo et Preparatio.” Sadly, the unit received news in October 1957 that the wing would be inactivated on 8 February 1958, and that its assets would be dispersed among existing USAFE units. Colonel Robert N. Baker, commander, praised the hardworking enlisted force in his farewell address, and lamented the passing of his cherished unit: “I hope that some day I may once again see the flag of the 21st unfurled to take its rightful place among the Air Force units.” Team 21 activated once more as the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing on 1 July 1958, assigned to Fifth Air Force in the Far East. Colonel Frank J. Collins

commanded for the first few weeks while the 21st set up at Misawa Air Base, Japan. The 21st mission included defending the the air space of northern Japan against Soviet intruders and planning for strategic bombardment in the event a new war broke out with North Korea (known as contingency plan "Quick Strike").

Component units of the 21st included the 416th and 531st Fighter Squadrons, the 21st Armament and Electronics Squadron, the 21st Field Maintenance Squadron, and the 21st Tactical Hospital. Initially, the 416th carried out the war-fighting missions in the F-84G Thunderjet, a single-seat fighter-bomber. The Thunderjet was the first fighter equipped to deliver non-conventional ordinance as well as the first capable of refueling in-flight.

Meanwhile, the 531st prepared to upgrade to the F-100D Supersabre, the world's first supersonic aircraft. Once combat ready in April 1959, the 531st assumed the wing's war-fighting missions while the 416th converted to the Supersabre in turn. Remarkably, the 416th achieved full operational status in August 1959. Cooperation between the wing's units paid off in Fifth Air Force's Tactical Evaluation and Operational Readiness Inspection held in August and September of 1959. The 21st garnered an "Excellent" rating and carried off the best bomb score average in the history of Fifth Air Force.

Operational readiness and high marks in training translated directly into the field. 21st aircraft intercepted Soviet Badger and Bison bombers on a regular basis, taking home, in the words of Intelligence analysts, "some of the best photographs ever taken of the Badger." In October 1959, First Lieutenant Charles L. Ferguson of the 531st received credit for making the first M-4 Bison intercept in the Far East and probably the world.

The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing also flew beyond the base at Misawa.

In addition to routine alert commitments and deployments to Korea, two F-100s from the 531st made the first American jet aircraft transpolar flight, flying from Weathersfield, England, to Eielson AB, Alaska, on 7 August 1959.

Once more, however, the accomplishments of the 21st came to a temporary halt, this time for six years. The U.S. government placed a ceiling on the number of fighter wings allowed in the Air Force inventory. Consequently, Fifth Air Force undertook an extensive reorganization. The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing inactivated on 18 June 1960 and its assets were transferred to the 39th Air Division at Misawa.

Unfortunately, the winter of 1970-1971 was severe in Alaska, causing numerous mechanical failures in the F-4s which had been accustomed to Florida's warm climate. At times, the wing's operational air defense assets dwindled from eighteen aircraft to only one or two. Moreover, the 43d assumed close air support as well as air defense responsibilities, two missions which stretched the squadron's capabilities. In response, Air Staff sent the 43d an additional six aircraft in May 1971.

Despite these initial handicaps, the 21 CW quickly proved itself a leader in the fighter community, conducting alerts, intercepts and exercises throughout the 1970s. In July 1972 the wing dispatched a detachment to Operation COOL SHOOT, a live missile firing exercise, held at Tyndall AFB, Florida. Air Force Headquarters awarded the 43d the coveted Hughes Achievement Trophy in December. Meanwhile, the 21 CW continued to intercept Soviet intruders into Alaskan airspace.

Exercises in 1976 included JACK FROST (later known as BRIMFROST), and a Tactical Air Command (TAC) Weapons System Evaluation Program at Eglin AFB, Florida. At the William Tell fighter weapons competition held in October-November 1976 at Tyndall, the wing won "Best F-4 Crew", "Best Maintenance Crew," the Apple Splitter Award for the most drones destroyed, the Top Gun Award, and only narrowly missed overall first place due to a sudden mission abort. The 43d again won the Hughes Achievement Trophy in 1977. Training deployments included the Canadian Maple Flag in September 1978 and Red Flag in April 1979.

Organizational changes also underscored the 1970s. Due to a realignment of airlift and rescue forces under the Military Airlift Command (MAC), the wing divested its helicopters and C-130s in 1975. Overall, however, the wing expanded, gaining two air base squadrons and several other responsibilities. The 21 CW picked up a new fighter unit on 1 October 1977 when the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron (F-4Es)

activated. Subsequently, the 43d maintained its air defense mission while the 18th adopted the role of close air support. Both units shared air defense alert duties in Alaska. Additionally, from November 1977 to April 1979, the 21 CW controlled all thirteen of Alaska's air control and warning sites. Then, in May 1979, Colonel Michael A. Nelson, 21st Composite Wing commander, initiated a study that concluded that his unit should be streamlined into a normal tactical fighter wing. AAC accepted his study and subsequently redesignated the 21st as the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing on 1 October 1979.

The 21st activated again as the 21st Composite Wing (CW) on 8 July 1966 at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, and was assigned to Alaskan Air Command (AAC). AAC itself was a component of the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD), which had been formed in 1954, and the Alaska Region Command of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) which had been formed in 1957. The 21st activated as an intermediate headquarters that could tie together and manage several missions critical to Alaskan Air Command.

Components of the 21 CW carried out the wing's three primary missions: air defense (317th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron), airlift (17th Troop Carrier Squadron, known from 1967 as the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron), and search and rescue (21st Operations Squadron). The 21st Operations Squadron (OSS), utilized H-21 helicopters for search and rescue work and employed C-47, C-54, and C-118 aircraft to assist with the mission of airlift. The 17th Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Squadron provided logistical airlift (with its C-130 Hercules aircraft). The 17th supported the various U.S. Army and AAC aircraft control and warning sites, and permanently stationed two C-130s on skis at Sondrestrom AFB, Greenland, in support of the Distant Early Warning Line sites (DEW).

The 317th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (FIS) carried out the mission of air defense for the wing. The 317th kept two of its F-102A Delta Dagger aircraft on alert at each of the following locations: Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force Bases, and King Salmon and Galena Airports. The 317th was one of the premier squadrons of its day, being the only unit to have won the prestigious Hughes Achievement Trophy (given for the best fighter unit with an active air defense mission) three times during its operational service.

The F-102s, unfortunately, were technologically outdated, a fact that made long-range interception of Soviet intruders into Alaskan airspace by 317th crews increasingly difficult. AAC recognized the limitations of this aerial platform and repeatedly tried to secure the more advanced F-4 for air defense. The war in Viet Nam, however, had first call for the F-4. For a few years, therefore, Air Defense Command (ADC) dispatched F-106s from other states on a rotational basis to Alaska to help correct this mission limitation.

The situation came to a head late in 1969 when the Air Force announced the inactivation of the 317th due to the squadron's aging F-102s and the need to respond to budget cuts imposed by the cost of the war in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the Air Force compensated the 21st by assigning the 43d Tactical Fighter Squadron, which flew F-4Es, to the wing on 13 March 1970. The 43d departed MacDill AFB, Florida and arrived at Elmendorf on 23 June 1970. Consequently, the rotational F-106

deployments from the lower continental states ceased soon after the 43d assumed mission responsibilities at Elmendorf, Eielson, Galena and King Salmon on 1 August.

Colonel Nelson continued as commander, helping to transition the wing into its new fighter role. The mixed bag of aircraft from the old Composite Wing dispersed, leaving 40 F-4Es, 12 T-33s, and a C-12 at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. The F-4s were distributed between the wing's two flying components, the 18th and 43d Tactical Fighter Squadrons, while the T-33 trainers and the C-12 merged into the 5021st Tactical Operations Squadron.

The F-4s of the streamlined wing soon deployed to Chong Ju Air Base, Republic of Korea for Exercise "TEAM SPIRIT." During March 1980 the wing participated in dissimilar air combat training (DACT) and conducted combat air patrol, air interdiction and composite force tactics. TEAM SPIRIT proved to be the last exercise for the 21st's F-4s. Later that year the Air Force released plans to replace the F-4Es stationed in Alaska with F-15A fighters, which were slated to go to the 43d Tactical Fighter Squadron, and A-10 close air support aircraft, which were earmarked for the 18th Tactical Fighter Squadron. In fact, the arrival of the A-10s heralded the reassignment of the 18th from the 21st to the 343d Composite Wing at Eielson AFB, Alaska.

The first F-15 arrived at Elmendorf in March, and the last of the new aircraft were in place by October. Thanks to special bomb-delivery air-to-surface training

carried out in the T-33s, the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing became the first flying unit to reach initial operating capability (IOC) in the F-15 without the assistance of the aircraft manufacturer or a sister flying unit. The 21st made its first intercept of a Soviet intruder, a Tu-95 Bear C, when a pair of F-15s sortied from alert at King Salmon Airport on 24 November 1982.

Over the next four years, the F-15s undertook several deployments and exercises such as "BRIM FROST," a U.S. Readiness Command biennial Arctic exercise, and "TEAM SPIRIT" held in Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1985. The 21st conducted joint training exercises along the northern continental frontier with the Canadians. All the while, the wing intercepted Soviet bomber, transport, and maritime reconnaissance aircraft flying over the Arctic Ocean and Bering Sea.

This creditable service continued throughout the late 1980s from the William Tell Air-to-Air Weapons meets to COMBAT ARCHER to DACT training to the Air Force's "live-fire" Weapon System Evaluation Programs. During one exercise at the remote site known as Deadhorse, Alaska, three F-15s became the first Alaskan-based single-seat fighters to circle the North Pole. The 21st received newer aircraft, its first F-15Cs and Ds, in May 1987.

The wing hosted multiple distinguished visitors in 1989. President George Bush stopped at Elmendorf in route to Japan for the state funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito and addressed a crowd of over 7,000 in Hangar Five. Ironically, this was the same hangar in which President Richard Nixon had greeted Hirohito eighteen years previously when the emperor had made his first official state visit outside his native land.

Later that year, the wing expanded into the escort rather than only the intercept business. Two Soviet MiG-29 "Fulcrum" aircraft, which were traveling to their first air show in North America, officially visited the 21st at Elmendorf, not only to refuel, but as a gesture of goodwill. This event marked the first time the

MiG-29 fighters landed on the continent, and the 21st's aircraft were there to escort them in, help them refuel, and play host.

The final upgrade of the 21st fighter inventory came with the addition of the 90th Tactical Fighter Squadron and the famous F-15E "Strike Eagle" in May 1991. The wing scarcely had completed pilot training on the new fighter-bomber when word of the Air Force Restructuring Program hit the Alaskan theater. The Air Force directed each base to have one wing and one commander; consequently, the wings of

Alaskan Air Command consolidated aircraft, personnel and resources under one wing, the 3rd at Elmendorf.

Although out of the business of flying, the 21st soon transitioned into the cutting edge of military operations - space.

The Air Force activated the 21st Space Wing at Peterson AFB on 15 May 1992. Since activation, the 21st Space Wing has become the largest military space wing in the world. Three Air Force units contributed to the activation of the 21st Space Wing: the 1st Space Wing, the 3d Space Support Wing and the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing. The 1st Space Wing (Air Force Space Command), which operated and managed ground and space-based sensors, was activated on 1 January 1983. The 3d Space Support Wing (Air Force Space Command), which acted as host base for Peterson and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Bases (now Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station), had been activated on 15

October 1986.

The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, from which the 21 SW derived its actual heritage, had been inactivated on 19 December 1991 at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Upon activation, the 21 SW absorbed the personnel and equipment of the inactivated 1 SW and 3 SSW. In accordance with Air Force policy, the 21 SW received the lineage and honors of the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing (1979-1992), the 21st Composite Wing

(1966-1979), the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing (1958-1960), and the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing (1953-1958).

In addition, Air Staff permitted the 21 SW to display honors

bestowed on the 21st Fighter Group (1944-1946) and the 21st Bombardment Group (1942-1943). HQ USAF decided to grant the new space wing the lineage and honors of these distinguished flying units in order to preserve essential Air Force heritage. For example, during a four-month period over Japan in 1945, the 21st Fighter Group scored over 60

confirmed aerial victories and had two aces, Major Harry Crimm and Captain Willis Matthews. Air Staff merged the operational units of the 1 SW and the support components of the 3 SSW to create the 21 SW in accordance with the “objective wing” concept established in the Department of the Air Force “White Paper” of September 1991. Stated simply, Air Staff directed the merger of wings at selected multi-wing bases in order to streamline and create one wing whose commander had control of both operational and support functions; in other words, “one base, one boss.”

Gen Donald J. Kutyna (left), commander, Air Force Space Command, inactivated the 1st Space Wing and 3d Space Support Wing on 15 May 1992. In attendance: 1st Space Wing commander Col Thomas J.

Scanlan, Jr. (right foreground), and 3d Space Support Wing commander Col Gerald M. Bergeman (right background). General Kutyna presented both wings with Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards. Brig Gen Ronald D. Gray (center background) prepared to take command of the 21st Space Wing during the subsequent activation ceremony.

Appendix B

The Legend of Iron Mike

Traditionally, military formations have chosen mascots as symbols of corporate pride. A mascot personifies the collective values of a unit and serves as a focus of morale. In 1996, the 21st Space Wing selected mascot called “Iron Mike,” and promoted him to Captain of the Team 21 “Guards.” “Iron Mike” leads the wing charge during the annual Guardian Challenge Competition where Team 21 goes head-to-head with other Air Force Space Command units from around the world.

The legend of “Iron Mike” began in 1966 when the 317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, adopted a five-foot, five inch, 45-pound suit of armor complete with helmet, sword, and shield as its mascot. The 317th was assigned to the 21st Composite Wing (CW), a lineal forerunner of the 21st Space Wing. Almost immediately, the 21 CW accepted “Iron Mike” as a symbol of the wing’s fighting spirit.

The prized suit of armor traveled between the squadrons of the 21st from 1966 through 1969.

Sometimes squadrons lent “Mike” voluntarily, while at other times intrepid bands of wing personnel “liberated” the

armored warrior from a sister unit. In between these tongue-in-cheek misadventures, “Iron Mike,” like a true knight errant, guarded against Cold War aggression over the far reaches of North America, and quested as far east as Greenland, and as far south as California.

“Mike” even followed the forces of freedom to Viet Nam for his baptism under fire.

“Iron Mike” remained associated with the 21 CW until 31 December 1969, when the 317th inactivated. Unfortunately, the squadron dispatched the mascot to the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, without clearance from the headquarters of the 21st Composite Wing. Despite appeals from the wing to have “Mike” returned, the cherished mascot remained at the museum where it stands to the present day.

The 21st Space Wing Emblem

Description: On a shield of azure, a broad sword argent, shaded silver, hilt and pommel or, shaded yellow, outlined of the field, between four red lightning streaks proper, two and two, bendwise.

Significance: The blue shield represents the vast blue sky—the 21st’s area of operations. The upraised sword indicates the strength and

readiness of our wing to perform its mission, whether in peace or war. The lightning is symbolic of the heavens beyond, our stormy power and protective Lord. The Air Force blue, red and yellow signify the three fighter squadrons of the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing. Approved by HQ USAF 23 July 1957. (The words on the scroll, "Strength and Preparedness," are derived from the original Latin scroll of "Fortitudo et Preparatio" from the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing).

21st Bombardment Group

Colonel Robert D. Knapp 9 Feb 42 - 26 Apr 42
Colonel William L. Lee 26 Apr 42 - 13 Aug 42
Lieutenant Colonel John F. Batjer 13 Aug 42 - 5 Oct 42
Colonel Carl R. Storrie 5 Oct 42 - 7 Nov 42
Colonel Guy L. McNeil 7 Nov 42 - 19 Apr 42
Colonel Don Z. Zimmerman 19 Apr 42 - 6 Jun 43
Lieutenant Colonel L. F. Brownfield 6 Jun 43 - 6 Jul 43
Colonel Richard T. Coiner, Jr. 6 Jul 43 - 10 Oct 43

21st Fighter Group

Colonel Kenneth R. Powell 21 Apr 44 - 10 Jun 45
Colonel Charles E. Taylor 10 Jun 45 - 15 Oct 45
Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Parsons 15 Oct 45 - 25 Nov 45
Colonel William Eades 25 Nov 45 - 21 Feb 46
Colonel Lester S. Harris 21 Feb 46 - 10 Oct 46

21st Fighter-Bomber Wing

Colonel James B. Buck 1 Jan 53 - 27 Apr 53
Colonel Robert R. Rowland 27 Apr 53 - 29 Jun 56
Colonel Robert N. Baker 29 Jun 56 - 8 Feb 58

21st Tactical Fighter Wing

Colonel Frank J. Collins 1 Jul 58 - 21 Apr 59
Colonel William W. Inghutt 21 Apr 59 - 28 Sep 59
Colonel Dean Davenport 28 Sep 59 - 18 Jun 60

21st Composite Wing

Colonel Donald H. Lynch 8 Jul 66 - 30 Jun 68
Colonel Charles W. Johnson, Jr. 30 Jun 68 - 23 Sep 69
Colonel Kenneth D. Dunaway 23 Sep 69 - 15 Jan 70
Colonel John A. Nelson 15 Jan 70 - 1 Sep 70
Colonel Kenneth D. Dunaway 1 Sep 70 - 23 Jul 71
Colonel James R. Larkins 23 Jul 71 - 9 Aug 71
Colonel James R. Brickel 9 Aug 71 - 12 Jul 72

21st Composite Wing

Colonel David T. Stockman 12 Jul 72 - 4 Jun 73
Colonel Charles F. Loyd 4 Jun 73 - 1 Jul 74
Colonel Fredrick C. Eaton 1 Jul 74 - 1 Jul 75
Colonel Edward L. Tixier 1 Jul 75 - 29 Apr 77
Colonel John T. Wotring 29 Apr 77 - 16 Apr 79
Colonel Michael A. Nelson 16 Apr 79 - 1 Oct 79

21st Tactical Fighter Wing

Colonel Michael A. Nelson 1 Oct 79 - 20 Feb 81
Colonel Jerry D. Cobb 20 Feb 81 - 15 Apr 82
Colonel Robert W. Hibarger (Interim) 15 Apr 82 - 22 Apr 82

Colonel Evan J. Griffith, Jr. 22 Apr 82 - 16 Apr 84
Colonel Wilfred K. Abbott 16 Apr 84 - 10 Jul 84
Colonel Pat R. Paxton 10 Jul 84 - 19 Mar 85
Colonel William R. Povilus 19 Mar 85 - 17 Oct 86
Colonel Stuart L. Alton 17 Oct 86 - 23 Aug 88
Colonel Harold S. Storer, Jr. 23 Aug 88 - 20 Mar 90
Colonel Donald J. Creighton 20 Mar 89 - 26 Sep 91
Colonel Rodney P. Kelly (Interim) 26 Sep 91 - 20 Dec 91
Colonel Donald J. Creighton 20 Dec 91 - 2 Feb 92

21st Space Wing

Brigadier General Ronald D. Gray 15 May 92 - 31 Aug 93
Brigadier General Donald G. Cook 31 Aug 93 - 10 Jan 95
Brigadier General Gerald F. Perryman 10 Jan 95 - 7 Jun 96
Brigadier General Franklin J. Blaisdell 7 Jun 96 - 19 Jun 98
Brigadier General Jerry M. Drennan 19 Jun 98 - 28 Aug 00
Brigadier General C. Robert Kehler 28 Aug 00 - 15 May 02
Brigadier General Duane W. Deal 15 May 02 - 11 Mar 04
Brigadier General Richard E. Webber 11 Mar 04 - 10 Nov 0
Colonel Jay G. Santee 10 Nov 05 - 28 Jun 07
Brigadier General John W. Raymond 28 Jun 07 - 20 Aug 09
Colonel Stephen N. Whiting 20 Aug 09 to present

21st Bombardment Group

Campaign Streamer
Antisubmarine, American Theater 7 Dec 41 - 2 Sep 45

21st Fighter Group

Campaign Streamer
Air Offensive, Japan 17 Apr 42 - 2 Sep 45
Decorations
Distinguished Unit Citation, Japan 7 Apr 45
21st Fighter-Bomber Wing None
21st Tactical Fighter Wing None

21st Composite Wing Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 8 Jul 66 - 1 May 67
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 2 May 67 - 1 Jan 68
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 2 Jan 68 - 31 Dec 68
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 69 - 31 Dec 69
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 70 - 31 Dec 70
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 71 - 31 Dec 71
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 72 - 31 Dec 72
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 74 - 31 Dec 74
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 75 - 31 Dec 75
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 78 - 31 Dec 78

21st Tactical Fighter Wing Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 80 - 31 Dec 80
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jul 82 - 30 Jun 83
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Oct 85 - 31 Dec 86
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 87 - 31 Dec 88

21st Space Wing Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Oct 92 - 30 Sep 94
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Oct 95 - 30 Sep 97
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Oct 97 - 30 Sep 99
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 98 - 31 Dec 98
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 99 - 31 Dec 99
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Jan 00 - 31 Aug 01
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award 1 Oct 05 - 30 Sep 07

The 21st Space Wing at Peterson AFB, Colo., ceased operations of the Air Force Space Surveillance System, marking the end of more than five decades of it detecting and tracking objects in orbit as part of the nation's broader space-surveillance network. Air Force Space Command announced in August that it would have to shutter the system, dubbed the space fence, come Oct. 1 due to resource constraints caused by budget sequestration. The fence consisted of nine sites in the southern part of the United States. AFSPC closed two of the fence's three transmitter sites in April; on Oct. 1, it shuttered the remaining transmitter and the six receiver stations and inactivated the 20th Space Control Squadron, Det. 1, at Dahlgren, Va., according to an Oct. 9 Peterson release. In lieu of the space fence, other Air Force space sensors are picking up the space-monitoring slack. AFSPC expects to save more than \$14 million per year, beginning in this fiscal year, by not operating the fence, states the release. 2013



Air Force Order of Battle
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Sources

Unit History. 21st Fighter Bomber Wing, France 1954-1957.