21ST SPACE WING

HERITAGE OF HONOR

STRENGTH AND PREPAREDNESS

Colonel Chris D. Crawford
Commander, 21st Space Wing
28 June 2011 - Present

AIRMAN'S CREED

I am an American Airman.
I am a Warrior.
I have answered my Nation's call.
I am an American Airman.
My mission is to Fly, Fight, and Win.
I am faithful to a Proud Heritage,
A Tradition of Honor,
And a Legacy of Valor.
I am an American Airman.
Guardian of Freedom and Justice,
My Nation's Sword and Shield,
Its Sentry and Avenger.
I defend my Country with my Life.
I am an American Airman.
Wingman, Leader, Warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind,
I will never falter,
And I will not fail.

Foreword
January 2013 edition

The 21st Space Wing activated on 15 May 1992 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. However, the lineage and honors of the 21st date back to the epic events of World War Two. The wing and group which flew under the numerical designation "21st" achieved a distinguished operational record while deployed to such exotic locales as Hawaii, Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam, France, Japan, Greenland, and Alaska. Moreover, flights and detachments of the old "21st" conducted exercises in Libya, Germany, Korea, the Caribbean, and South America. Clearly, the history of the "21st" is international in scope.

Today, the mission of the 21st Space Wing remains international. With thirty-nine units and five associated units, spread over twenty-nine locations in six countries across fourteen time zones and with thirteen "weapon systems," the 21st Space Wing remains the most geographically diverse wing in the United States Air Force. The wing is also one of the very largest organizationally. Our wing has emerged as a forefront global leader in space and our responsibility increases as missions are added or expanded.

I offer this edition of our heritage pamphlet out of respect for the past, current, and future members of the 21st in the hope that the brief material presented herein may in some way illuminate or inspire them to ever greater endeavor. Truly, ours is a heritage of honor.

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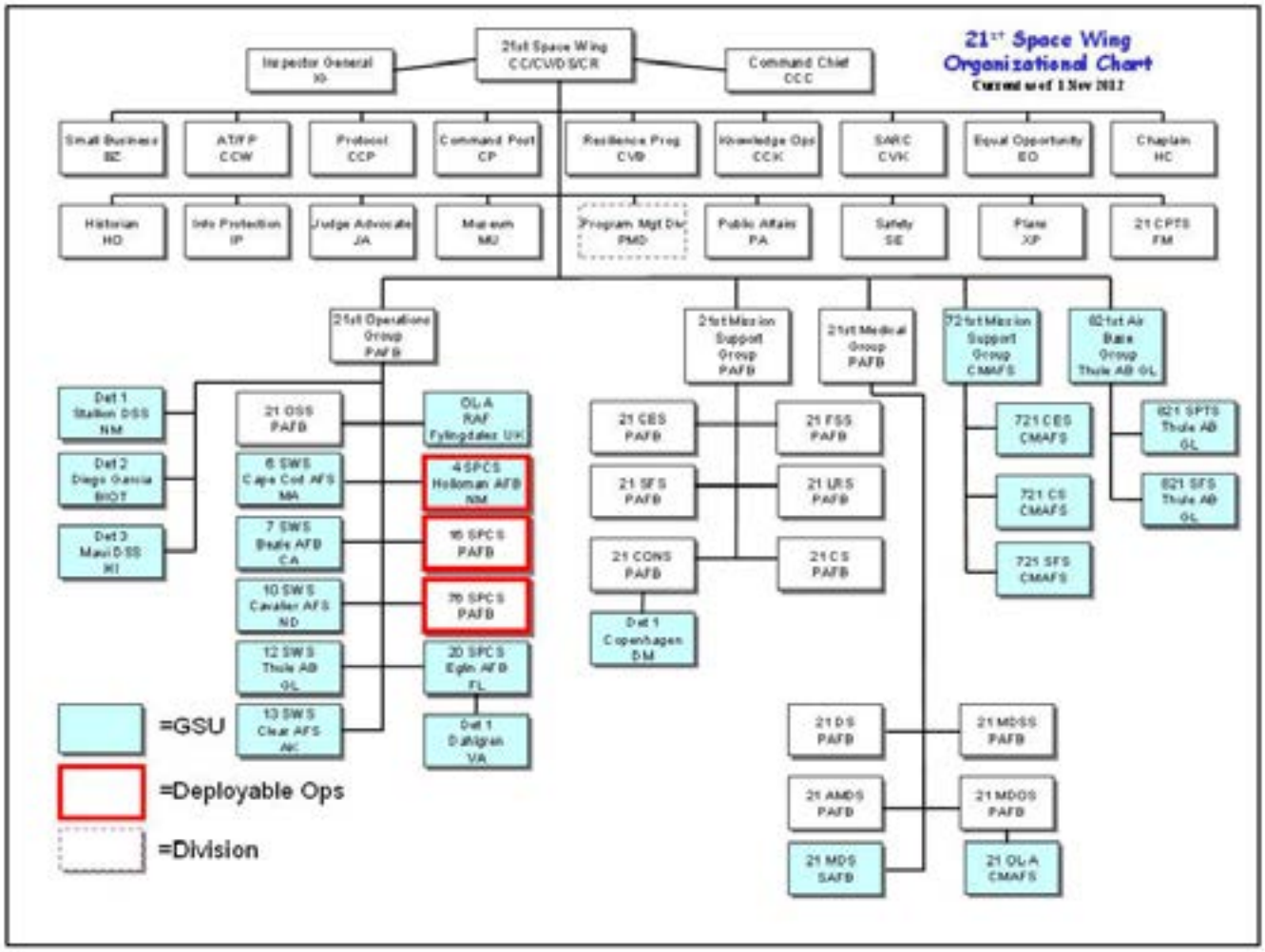
21 SW Unit Locations



Introduction

Throughout history military formations have looked upon their heritage with pride and with the certain conviction that a record of distinction can contribute to the esprit de corps of an operational unit. The 21st Space Wing activated on 15 May 1992; however, the wing's actual lineage and honors date back to 1942. The 21st Space Wing's lengthy heritage is due to Air Force policy established in the 1950s. Expressed simply, the Air Force began attaching the lineage and honors of distinguished World War Two Army air groups to active Air Force wings which bore the same numerical designations. Through this policy the Air Force sought to recognize and preserve the traditions of the valiant air groups which hadpaved the way for the birth of the United States Air Force in 1947. This explains why the 21st Bombardment Group and the 21st Fighter Group are part of the heritage of the 21st Space Wing.

The numerical designation "21st" became attached to our newly activating space wing as a result of the dramatic Air Force re-structuring which began in 1991 shortly after the victorious conclusion of Operation DESERT STORM. The Air Force Chief of Staff attempted to preserve the heritage of distinguished fighter units, which were inactivating, by attaching their numerical designations to any activating units. The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing inactivated on 19 December 1991; consequently, when our new space wing activated on 15 May 1992, we received "21st" as our numerical designation. Additionally, we inherited the proud lineage and honors bornepreviously by the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing.

During our seventy years of tradition, the 21st has assumed several different missions and has employed multiple weapon systems in its effort to hold the "high ground." Today we hold the high ground in space, the infinite frontier.

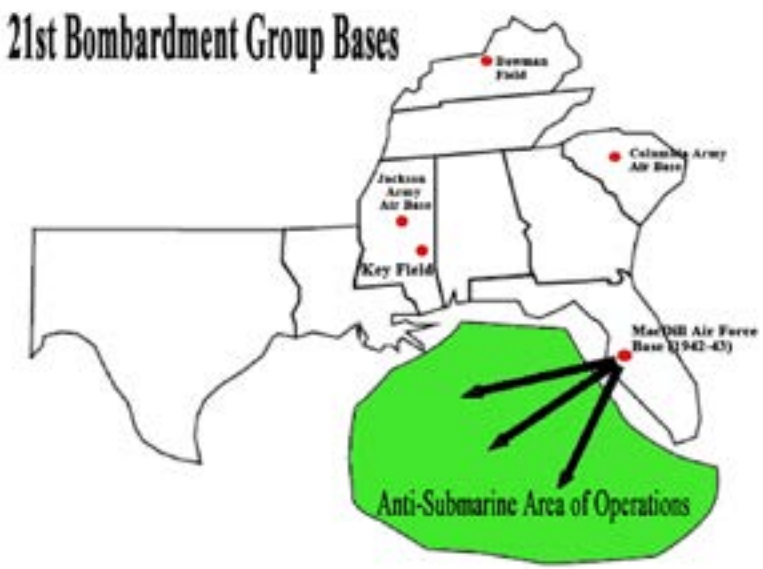
21st Bombardment Group
1 February 1942 - 10 Oct 1943

A B-25 of the 21st Bombardment Group
hunts for German U-Boats in the Gulf of Mexico,
summer of 1942

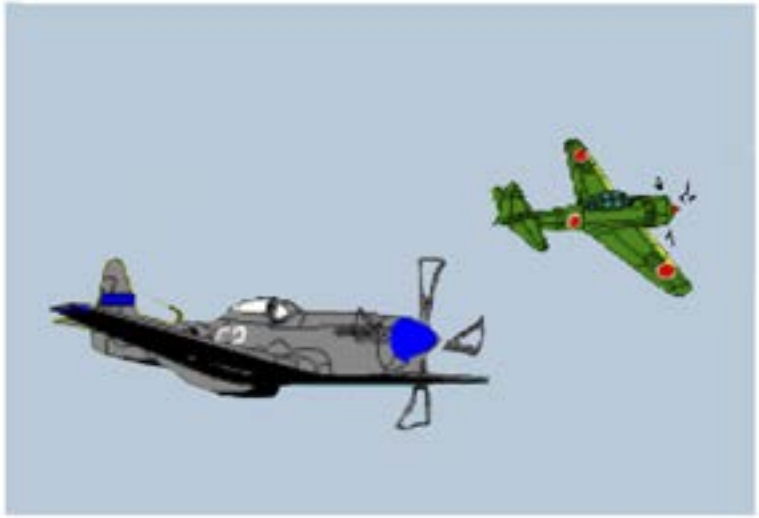
The 21st Bombardment Group

The history of the 21st began with the activation of the 21st Bombardment Group (Medium) at Bowman Field, Kentucky, on 1 February 1942. Thereafter, from February 1942 until October 1943, the group relocated successively to Jackson Army Air Base (AAB), Mississippi, Columbia AAB, South Carolina, Key Field, Mississippi, and MacDill Field,Florida.

The 21st initially trained on B-25 bombers then converted to B-26s. The group largely served as an operational training unit assigned to Third Air Force; however, while at MacDill Field, from June 1942 to October 1943, the 21st additionally carried out anti-submarine patrols over the Caribbean Sea. For this action the group received the Anti-Submarine 1941-1945 campaign streamer. The 21st inactivated on 10 October 1943.



21st Fighter Group
21 April 1944 - 10 October 1946



The 21st Fighter Group flew its first bomber escort mission and destroyed eight enemy aircraft on 7 April 1945

The 21st Fighter Group

The 21st did not have to wait long to write a further chapter in the history of warfare. Another unit in the lineage of the 21st SpaceWing, the 21st Fighter Group (FG), activated on 21 April 1944 at WheelerAir Field in what was then the territory of Hawaii. Assigned toVII Fighter Command, the group consisted of the 46th, 72d, and 531st Fighter Squadrons.

Over the next two months, the group trained on its first aircraft type, the P-39Q Airacobra. The 21st provided air defense over the Hawaiian Islands from July 1944, then began upgrading into the P-38J/L Lightning in September. By the end of October, rumors filled the air that the group soon would upgrade airframes again, this time to the P-51 Mustang. This change in aircraft heralded a new mission for the 21 FG.

True to rumor, leading echelons began deploying by ship to the island of Iwo Jima in the western Pacific in February 1945. Before the end of the month, the 21st began flying patrols over the critical island base in support of ground operations.

The final group echelon arrived at Iwo Jima on March 25. Early the next morning, elements of the 21st were attacked in their encampment by Japanese soldiers. Assisted by a patrol of American Marines, 21st personnel counter-attacked and in the tent-by-tent fighting killed 250 of the enemy. Fourteen group personnel were killed and 50, including 21 FG commander Colonel Kenneth Powell, were wounded.

The first long-range aerial mission of the 21st Fighter Group against the mainland of Japan began on 7 April 1945, when the group's Mustangs escorted a formation of B-29 bombers against the fortified and well-defended Nakajima aircraft factory near Tokyo. This mission marked the first time fighters had escorted bombers over Japan. Moreover, this mission has been credited as having been the longest over-water fighter escort sortie to date. Over the following weeks, the 21st escorted American B-29s over enemy airfields and industrial targets and engaged rival Japanese fighter aircraft.

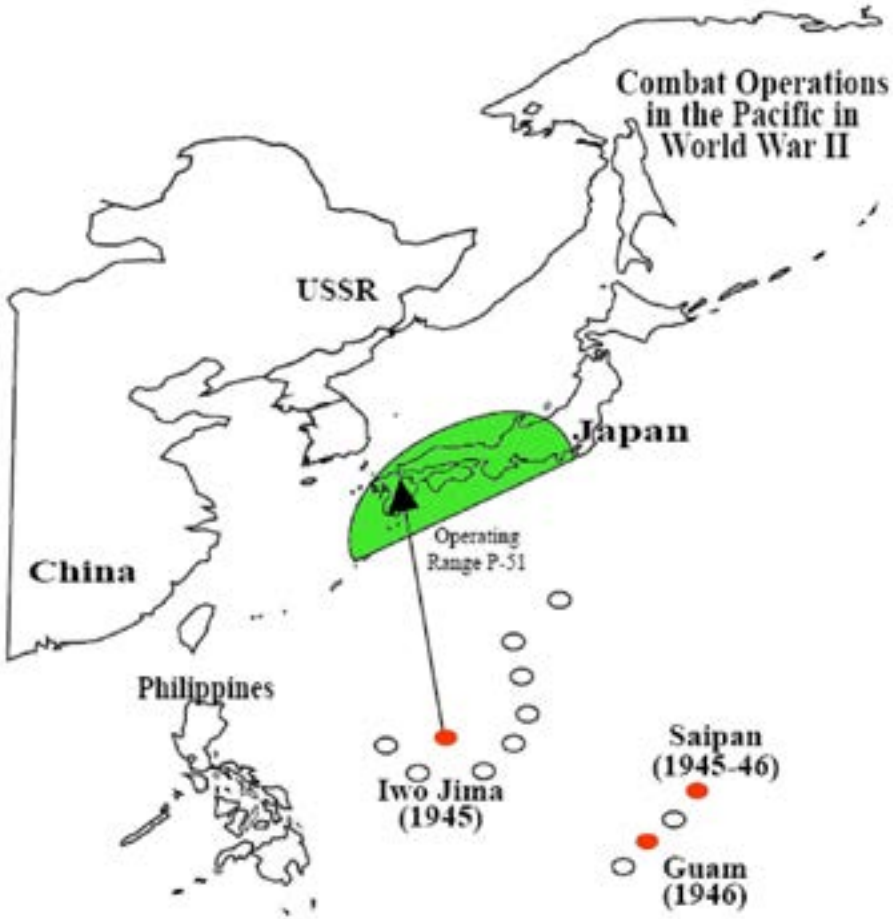
The 531st Squadron achieved another first for the 21 FG in June 1945 by initiating aerial rocket strike sorties against select enemy targets which included ships and a radio station.

In the meantime, the groups' aircraft continued to duel in the air and two "aces" soon emerged: Major Harry Crim and Captain Willis Matthews, both of the 531st Fighter Squadron. Aircrews of the 21st also strafed the airfields which the Japanese used for their increasingly dangerous *kamikaze* attacks.

The 21 FG flew its last combat mission 14 August 1945, about two weeks before the official Japanese capitulation on 2 September. The group received the Distinguished Unit Citation on 13 November 1945 specifically for its outstanding conduct during the earlier raid on Nakajima.

However, the 21st had played a laudable part throughout the final stages of the war in the Pacific.

After the war, the group transferred from Iwo Jima, first to Saipan, then finally to Guam. The original 21 FG inactivated on 10 October 1946.

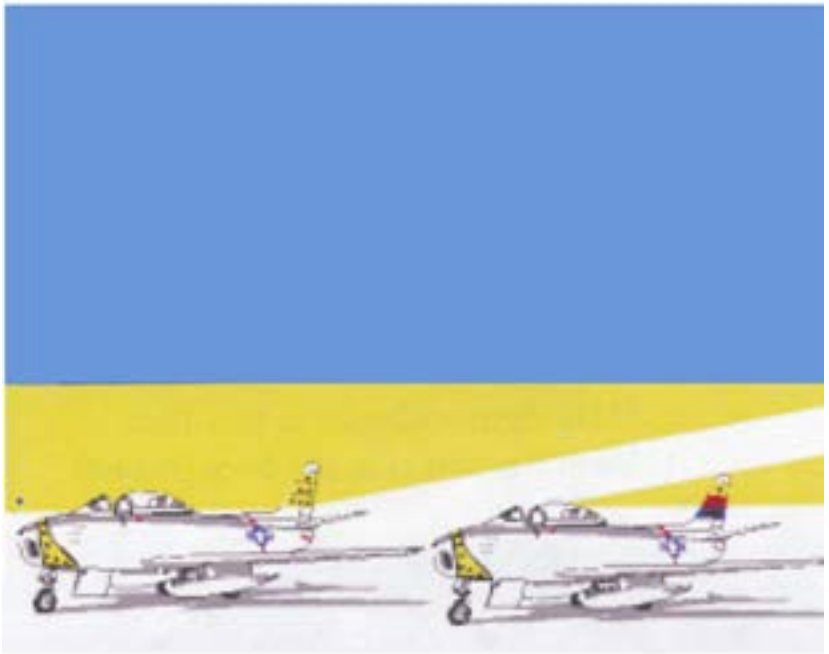


Colonel Charles E. Taylor
Commander, 21st Fighter Group
10 June 1945 - 14 October 1945

21st Fighter Group at Iwo Jima
(Mount Suribachi in the background)

Flight Line, Iwo Jima, Field No. 2,
Spring 1945

21st Fighter-Bomber Wing
1 January 1953 - 8 February 1958



Operation BOXKITE
10 April - 17 May 1955
proved the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing's readiness

The 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing

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 northeasternborder 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. Morever, 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."

Brigadier General Robert R. Rowland
Commander, 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing
27 April 1953 - 28 June 1956

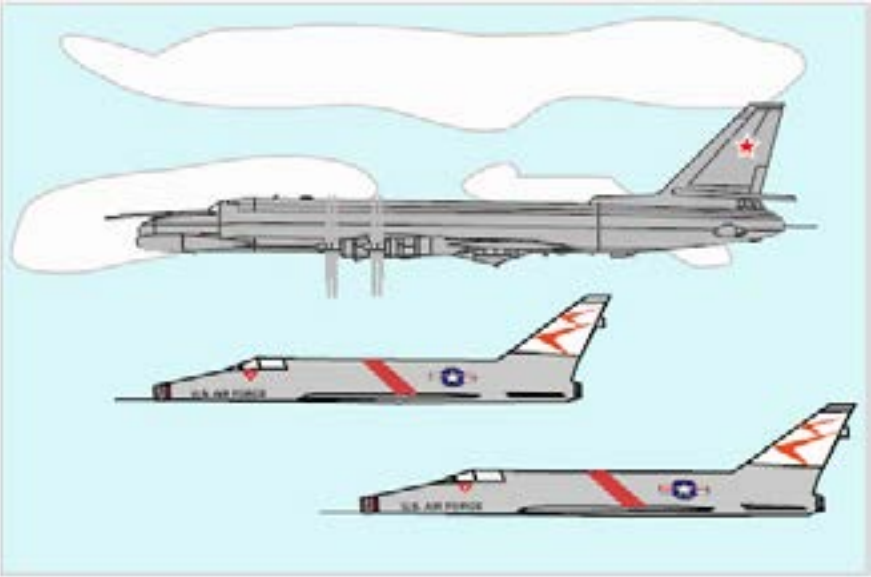
Loading .50 caliber ammunition and a 500 pound general purpose bomb for training mission.

F-86F-30,
21st Fighter-Bomber Wing Commander's Aircraft,
Tail Number 52-5222 in 1957.

Original Emblem of
the 416th Fighter-Bomber Squadron,
21st Fighter-Bomber Wing

The Wing's First Knight of the Sky

21st Tactical Fighter Wing
1 July 1958 - 18 June 1960



1 October 1959, two F-100Ds from the 21 TFW intercept a Soviet Bison bomber, first Soviet bomber intercepted anywhere in the world

The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing

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").

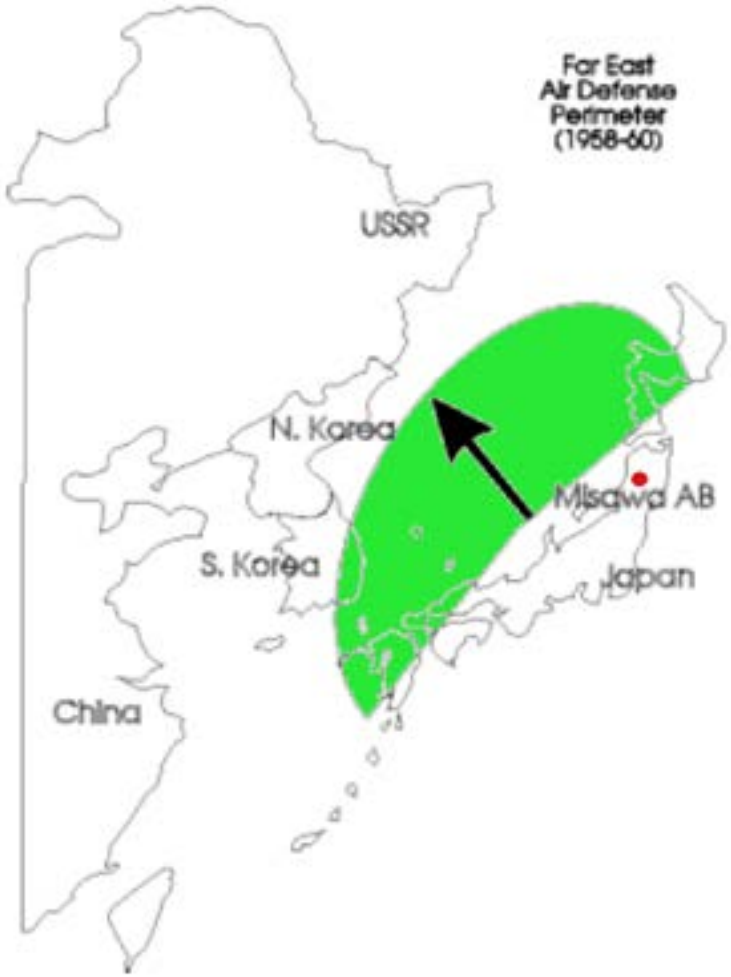
Component units of the 21st included the 416th and 531st Fighter Squadrons, the 21st Armament and Electronics Squadron, the 21st Field Maintenance Squadron, and the 21st Tactical Hospital. Initially, the 416th carried out the war-fighting missions in the F-84G Thunderjet, a single-seat fighter-bomber. 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.

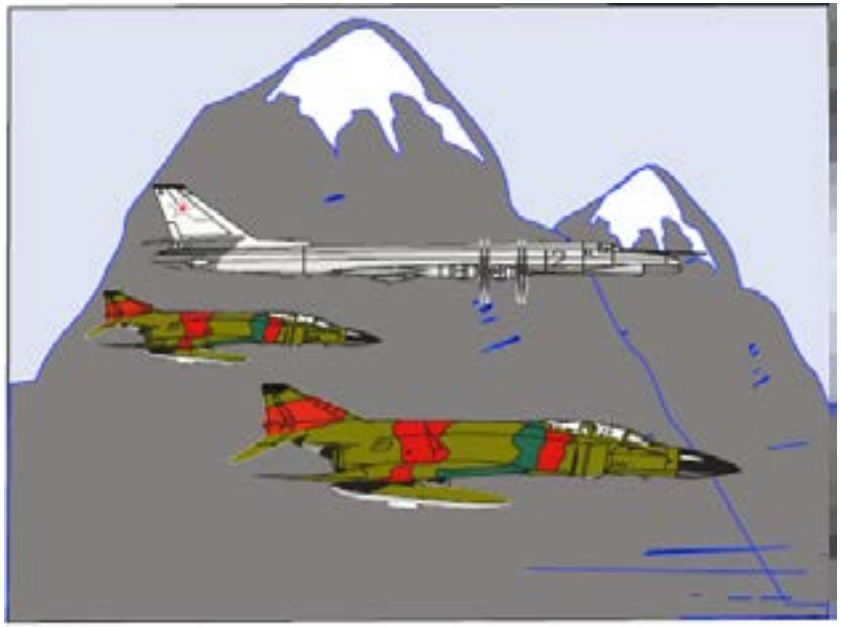


Colonel Dean Davenport
Commander, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing
28 September 1958 - 18 June 1960

F-100D, Tail Number 56-3345,
416th Tactical Fighter Squadron,
21st Tactical Fighter Wing,
Misawa AB, Japan, 1960

F-100F, Tail Number 58-1227,
416th Tactical Fighter Squadron,
21st Tactical Fighter Wing,
North Pole Flight, August 1959

21st Composite Wing
8 July 1966 - 1 October 1979



During the Cold War,
the 21st intercepted Soviet aircraft
and escorted them away from North America

The 21st Composite Wing

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 airspaceby 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.

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 May1971.

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.

**F-102s fly near Mt McKinley, Alaska,
317th Fighter Interceptor Squadron,
21st Composite Wing**

**F-4s flying patrol over Alaska,
43d Tactical Fighter Squadron, 21st Composite Wing**

21st Tactical Fighter Wing
1 October 1979 - 2 February 1992

As the Cold War thawed, the Soviet threat decreased. 21 TFW F-15s escorted the first Soviet MiG-29s to visit North America in 1989

The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing

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. Thisevent 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.

Colonel Stuart L. Alton
Commander, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing
17 October 1986 - 22 August 1988

Two-seat F-15 lands at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

Intercept of Soviet Tu-95 Bear
by F-15As of the 43d Tactical Fighter Squadron
south of Shemya Island, 29 November 1982

DSP kept watch over our nation and allies
since the early 1970s.
The 21st Space Wing was associated with DSP from
15 May 1992 to 19 August 2004

Activation of the 21st Space Wing

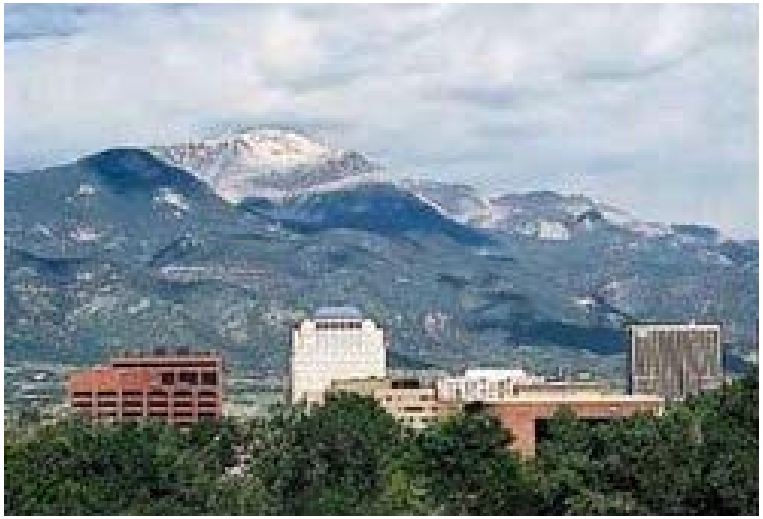
Gen Donald J. Kutyna (left), commander, Air Force Space Command, inactivated the 1st Space Wing and 3d Space Support Wing on 15 May 1992. In attendance: 1st Space Wing commander Col Thomas J. Scanlan, Jr. (right foreground), and 3d Space Support Wing commander Col Gerald M. Bergeman (right background).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

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."



Colorado Springs. Home of Headquarters
21st Space Wing

19th Space Surveillance Squadron
Pirinclik Air Force Station, Turkey
Unit inactivated in 1997

9th Space Warning Squadron
PAVE PAWS, Robins AFB, Georgia
Unit inactivated in 1995

12th Space Warning Squadron
Thule AB, Greenland
SSPAR

721st Mission Support Group,
Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station

Mobile Ground System Vans of the 4 SWS
Transferred to 137 SWS (Colorado ANG unit) in 1997

20th Space Surveillance Squadron
(now 20th Space Control Squadron)
Eglin AFB, Florida
AN/FPS-85

7th Space Warning Squadron,
Beale Air Force Base, California

Appendix A

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 orginal Latin scroll of "Fortitudo et Preparatio" from the 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing).

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 ofthe 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.

Iron Mike
SSgt Barton Bosarge, wing mascot, arrives at Vandenberg AFB, California on 6 May 2001 for Guardian Challenge

Appendix C

The Commanders

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. Ingenhutt	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	11Mar 04 - 10 Nov 05
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 - 28 Jun 11
Colonel Chris D. Crawford	28 Jun 11 to present

Appendix D
Duty Stations

21st Bombardment Group
- Bowman Field, Kentucky 1 Feb 42 - 8 Feb 42
- Jackson Army Air Base, Mississippi 8 Feb 42 - 21 Apr 42
- Columbia Army Air Base, S. Carolina 21 Apr 42 - 24 May 42
- Key Field, Mississippi 24 May 42 - 27 Jun 42
- MacDill Field, Florida 27 Jun 42 - 10 Oct 43

21st Fighter Group
- Wheeler Field, Hawaii 21 Apr 44 - 13 Oct 44
- Mokuleia, Field, Hawaii 13 Oct 44 - 2 Mar 45
- Central Field (Airfield No. 2), Iwo Jima 26 Mar 45 - 16 Jul 45
- South Field, Iwo Jima 16 Jul 45 - 1 Dec 45
- Isley Field, Saipan 1 Dec 45 - 15 Apr 46
- Northwest Field, Guam 15 Apr 46 - 10 Oct 46

21st Fighter-Bomber Wing
- George AFB, California 1 Jan 53 - 13 Dec 54
- Chambley AB, France 13 Dec 54 - 8 Feb 58

21st Tactical Fighter Wing
- Misawa AB, Japan 1 July 58 - 18 Jun 60

21st Composite Wing
- Elmendorf AFB, Alaska 8 Jul 66 - 1 Oct 79

21st Tactical Fighter Wing
- Elmendorf AFB, Alaska 1 Oct 79 - 2 Feb 92

21st Space Wing
- Peterson AFB, Colorado 15 May 92 - Present

Appendix E
Campaign Streamers and Decorations

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 - 31Aug 01
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award	1 Oct 05 - 30 Sep 07
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award	1 Oct 09 - 30 Sep 11

Appendix F

Weapon Systems

Designation	Common Name	Manufacturer	Type
21st Fighter Group			
P-39Q	Airacobra	Bell	Fighter
P-38J/L	Lightning	Lockheed	Fighter
C-47A	Skytrain	Douglas	Cargo Transport
AT-6	Texan	North American	Trainer
RA-24A	Dauntless	Douglas	Scout Bomber
P-51D	Mustang	North American	Fighter
P-47N	Thunderbolt	Republic	Fighter
21st Fighter-Bomber Wing			
AT-6A	Texan	North American	Trainer
C-47A	Skytrain	Douglas	Cargo Transport
P-51D	Mustang	North American	Fighter
A-26C	Invader	Douglas	Attack Bomber
T-33A	Shooting Star	Lockheed	Jet Trainer
F-86E	Sabrejet	North American	Fighter
21st Tactical Fighter Wing			
F-84G	Thunderjet	Republic	Tactical Fighter
T-33A	Shooting Star	Lockheed	Jet Trainer
F-100D/F	Supersabre	North American	Fighter

Weapons (Cont)

Designation	Common Name	Manufacturer	Type
21st Composite Wing			
F-102A/TF-102A	Delta Dagger	Convair	Jet Fighter
T-33A	Shooting Star	Lockheed	Jet Trainer
T-39	Sabreliner	Lockheed	Transport
EB-57E	Intruder	Martin	Electronic Warfare
C-12	King Air	Beechcraft	Liaison
C-130D/C-130D-6	Hercules	Lockheed	Transport Aircraft
C-118A/EC-118/VC-118	Liftmaster	Douglas	Cargo Transport, Electronic Counter-measures, VIP
C-123B	Provider	Fairchild Hiller	Cargo Transport
C-124A	Globemaster	Douglas	Cargo Transport
EC-54D	Skymaster	Douglas	Electronic Warfare
HH-3/CH-3	Jolly Green Giant	Sikorsky	Air Rescue Helicopter
CH-21B	Workhorse	Boeing Vertol	Helicopter
21st Tactical Fighter Wing			
T-33A	Shooting Star	Lockheed	Jet Trainer
F-4E	Phantom II	McDonnell-Douglas	Fighter
F-15A/C/D/E	Eagle	McDonnell-Douglas	Fighter
A-10A	Thunderbolt II	Republic	Close Air Support

Weapon Systems (cont)

Designation	System Type	Location	Mission
21st Space Wing			
AN/FPS-123	Solid-State Phased Array	Thule AB,	Missile Warning/
AN/FPS-50	Radar (SSPAR) Detection Radar	Greenland Clear AFS, AK*	Space Surveillance Missile Warning/
AN/FPS-92	Tracking Radar	Clear AFS, AK	Space Surveillance Missile Warning/
AN/FPQ-16	Perimeter Acquisition Radar	Cavalier AFS, ND	Space Surveillance Missile Warning/
AN/FPS-115	Characterization System (PARCS) PAVE Phased Array	Cape Cod AFS, MA Cape Cod AFB, MA	Space Surveillance Submarine Launched
AN/FPS-85	Warning System (PAVE PAWS) Phased Array Radar	Beale AFB, CA Robins AFB, GA* Eldorado AFS, TX* Eglin AFB, FL	Ballistic Missile Warning/Space Surveillance Space Surveillance
AN/FPS-17	Detection Radar	Pirinclik AB, Turkey*	Space Surveillance
AN/FPS-79	Tracking Radar	Pirinclik AB, Turkey*	Space Surveillance
Ground-based Electro-Optical Deep Space Surveillance (GEODSS)	Electro-Optical Imaging	Socorro, NM Diego Garcia, BIOT Maui, HI	Deep Space Surveillance/Space Object Identification

Weapon Systems (cont)

Transportable Optical System	Electro-Optical Imaging	Moron AB, Spain	Deep Space Surveillance/Space Object Identification
Defense Support Program Satellites	Geosynchronous satellite with infrared detector	Various Ground Stations Worldwide	ICBM/Space Launch Early Warning/ Nuclear Detonation Detection
AN/MSQ-118 & AN/MSQ-120	Mobile Processing Capability for DSP	137 SWS Colorado Air National Guard, Greeley, CO	ICBM/Space Launch Early Warning/ Nuclear Detonation
C-21A	Learjet	Gates-Lear	Detection Liaison/Transport Aircraft**

* Unit/Equipment Inactivated

** 84th Airlift Flight transferred from 21st Space Wing to Air Mobility Command (AMC) in 1997

Appendix G
History of Peterson AFB

Peterson AFB traces its roots to the Colorado Springs Army Air Base, established on 6 May 1942 at the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport, which has been in operation since 1926. The base carried out photo reconnaissance training under the auspices of the Photo Reconnaissance Operational Training Unit (PROTU). On 22 June 1942, Colorado Springs Army Air Base was assigned to the 2d Air Force, headquartered at Fort George Wright, Washington.

Then, after only a few weeks, a tragedy occurred that would indelibly affect the base. On 8 August 1942, First Lieutenant Edward J. Peterson, Operations Officer for the 14th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron and a native of Colorado, crashed while attempting to take off from the airfield when the left engine of his twin engine F4 (a reconnaissance variant of the P-38 Lightning) failed. A base fire department crew rescued Lt Peterson from the burning wreckage. Unfortunately, Lt Peterson sustained significant burns and died at Penrose hospital that afternoon, thereby becoming the first Coloradan killed in a flying accident at the airfield. Consequently, on 13 December 1942, officials changed the name of the Colorado Springs Army Air Base to Peterson Army Air Base in honor of the fallen airman.

The base assumed a new mission in the spring of 1943, that of heavy bomber combat crew training. The 214th Combat Crew Training School conducted the training, utilizing the B-24 Liberator. From 5 March to 1 October 1943, "Peterson Field," as the base was commonly called, was assigned to the 3d Air Force, headquartered at Greenville Army Air Base, South Carolina. Control of Peterson Field later reverted to the 2d Air Force. In June 1944, the mission at the base once again changed, this time to fighter pilot training. The 72d Fighter Wing, assigned to the base, employed P-40 Warhawks to carry out this mission.

In April 1945, Peterson Field was assigned to Continental Air Forces. The location of the Army Air Forces Instructors School at the base signaled another mission change. A short time later, on 31 December 1945, the Army inactivated the base, turning the property over to the City of Colorado Springs.

The legacy of Peterson Field and the military presence in Colorado Springs took a significant turn in September 1947, following the birth of the United States Air Force. Soon after its inception, the fledgling service twice reactivated the base from 29 September 1947 to15 January 1948 and again from 22 September 1948 into 1949. During the latter period, the base served as an airfield for Headquarters, 15th AirForce which had been temporarily located in Colorado Springs. Peterson Field inactivated again when the 15th Air Force moved to March Air Force Base in 1949.

The Edward J. Peterson Museum

The Air Force activated Peterson Field once more following the January 1951 establishment of Air Defense Command at Ent AFB, located in downtown Colorado Springs. The 4600th Air Base Group activated simultaneously on 1 January 1951 and provided support for the newly established command. In 1958, the 4600th achieved wing status and was designated as the 4600th Air Base Wing. Subsequently, on 1 April 1975, the Air Force redesignated the wing as the 46th Aerospace Defense Wing. One year later, on 1 March 1976, Peterson Field was renamed Peterson Air Force Base.

Strategic Air Command assumed control of the base on 1 October 1979. Then, on 1 September 1982, USAF officials activated Air Force Space Command at Peterson, followed by the activation of the1st Space Wing on 1 January 1983. Peterson Air Force Base became the hub of Air Force space activity when the 1st Space Wing assumed host unit responsibility following the inactivation of the 46th Aerospace Defense Wing on 1 April 1983. The 1st Space Wing then transferred host unit responsibility to the 3d Space Support Wing, which activated on 15 October 1986. Finally, on 15 May 1992, these two wings inactivated and their personnel and equipment transferred to the 21st Space Wing, which activated on 15 May 1992.

Main Gate, Peterson Field, 1942

The 21st Space Wing: "First in Space, First to the Moon"

Lt Col Michael Collins,
Module Pilot of the Apollo 11
Moon Mission in 1969

1Lt Michael Collins,
21st Fighter Bomber Wing,
in 1955

Michael Collins was born in 1930 and received his Air Force commission in 1952. After serving with the 21st Fighter Bomber Wing at George Air Force Base, California, he relocated with the wing to Chambley Air Base, France in 1954. Collins joined NASA from 1963 – 1970, taking part in the Gemini 10 mission in 1966 and in the Apollo 11 landing on the moon from 16-24 July 1969. Although a part of the first team of humans to land on the moon, Lieutenant Colonel Collins remained in the command module *Columbia* as command pilot, while Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin physically landed in the lunar module, *Eagle*.
He retired from the Air Force in 1978 with the rank of major general.

*The 21st has had at least two officers with the last name "Collins." Colonel Frank J. Collins commanded the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing at Misawa Air Base, Japan in 1958.

First Lieutenant Michael Collins, 21st Fighter-Bomber Wing, 1955 (bottom row, third from the right).
Collins later signed the wing yearbook and noted his *Gemini* 10 and *Apollo* 11 Missions