

125 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

125 Observation Squadron designated and allotted to NG, 30 Jul 1940

Received federal recognition, 31 Jan 1941

Activated 10 Feb 1941

Redesignated 125 Observation Squadron (Light), 13 Jan 1942

Redesignated 125 Observation Squadron, 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 125 Liaison Squadron, 2 Apr 1943

Inactivated 15 Dec 1945

Redesignated 125 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946

125 Fighter Squadron (Single-Engine) extended federal recognition, 15 Feb 1947

Redesignated 125 Fighter-Bomber Squadron (Jet) 15 March 1950

Redesignated 125 Fighter-Bomber Squadron

Redesignated 125 Fighter Interceptor Squadron

Redesignated 125 Air Transport Squadron, 15 Jan 1960

Redesignated 125 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 25 Jan 1973

Redesignated 125 Fighter Squadron 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Tulsa, OK, 10 Feb 1941

Post Field, OK, 20 Sep 1941

Brownwood, TX, 15 Apr 1942

Abilene, TX, 29 Jun 1942

DeRidder AAB, LA, 26 Jul 1942

Abilene, TX, 27 Sep 1942

Alamo Field, TX, 1 Jul 1943

Desert Center AAFld, CA, 11 Oct 1943
Thermal AAFld, CA, 11 Nov 1943-18 May 1944
Cheltenham, England, 8 Jun 1944
Chedworth, England, 19 Jun 1944
Erlestokes, England, 9 Jul 1944 (detachments operated from France after 23 Aug 1944)
St Sauveur-Lendelin, France, 1 Sep 1944
Rennes, France, 3 Sep 1944
Arlon, Belgium, 1 Oct 1944
Maastricht, Holland, 21 Oct 1944
Munchen-Gladbach, Germany, 9 Mar 1945
Haltern, Germany, 4 Apr 1945
Gutersloh, Germany, 12 Apr 1945
Brunswick, Germany, 24 Apr 1945
Heidelberg, Germany, 10 Jun 1945
Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, 25 Jul-15 Dec 1945
Tulsa, OK

ASSIGNMENTS

Oklahoma NG, 10 Feb 1941
68 Observation Group, 15 Sep 1941
77 Observation (later Reconnaissance) Group, 12 Mar 1942
II Air Support Command (later II Tactical Air Division), 11 Aug 1943
III (later I) Tactical Air Division, 11 Oct 1943
US Strategic Air Forces in Europe, 4 Jun 1944
Ninth Air Force, 7 Jun 1944
IX Fighter Command, 1 Dec 1944
XII Tactical Air Command, 20 Jun-15 Dec 1945

ATTACHMENTS

76 Tactical Reconnaissance Group to Jan 1944
Headquarters Command, European Theater of Operations, 7 Jun-17 Jul 1944
Ninth Army, 17 Jul-15 Nov 1944
XIX Tactical Air Command [Prov], 15 Nov 1944
XXIX Tactical Air Command [Prov]
Twelfth Army Group, 15 Nov 1944-8 Jun 1945
Sixth Army Group, 8 Jun-25 Jul 1945
Headquarters Command, US Forces, European Theater, 25 Jul-15 Dec 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

O-38, 1941
O-47
BC-1
O-49

O-52
O-59, 1941
YO-50
O-57
O-58 1941
L-5, 1943
P-51
F-84
F-51
F-80, 1954
F-86, 1957
C-97, 1959
C-124, 1968
F-100, 1973
A-7, 1978
F-16

Support Aircraft

T-33

COMMANDERS

Maj Robert O. Lindsay, 10 Feb 1941-Aug 1941
Maj Staryl C. Auston, Jr.
Lt Col Joseph W. Turner
Maj John D. Ballard, Jul 1977
Lt Col Stephen P. Cortright, 30 Aug 1983
Maj Kenneth W. McGill, 1 Feb 1984

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army
[20] Oct-17 Dec 1944
18 Dec 1944-15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM



125 Observation Squadron emblem: Much of the success of our nation's military operations in time of war can be attributed to the sense of duty and non-stimulated patriotism of its citizen constabularies. National Guard organizations, filling the need for auxiliary supervision over the protection of life and property during a public crisis, or functioning as recognized combatant units during the time of war, are the first of any semi-military group to become Federalized during a national emergency. The 125th Observation Squadron, organized as a National Guard unit at Tulsa, Oklahoma, late in 1941, was no exception. It was Federalized almost immediately. Soon thereafter, a very Disneyesque racoon joined the ranks of the Squadron. His position in the air, and his employment of binoculars brand him unmistakably as an active member of an observation unit.



On a white disc, border black, a caricatured beaver in proper color, wearing a white shirt, blue coat, and high silk hat, holding a swagger stick in the left hand, and three aces in the right hand, spades, hearts, and diamonds respectively. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Dressed in a white shirt, blue coat, and a top hat, the beaver mascot had a swagger stick in its left hand, and supposedly, its right hand originally displayed three playing cards, an ace, a deuce, and a five, respectively, from left to right, representing the 125 squadron. After mobilization, the cards were changed to the ace

of diamonds, hearts, and spades, left to right, respectively, in order to maintain security concerning the unit's identity. (Approved, 15 Sep 1943)

The eager beaver has been employed by the 125 Tactical Fighter Squadron since World War II. Although the aircraft and mission has changed through the years, the beaver has been a faithful companion. The beaver was created by Air Guard member Hal Thompson in March 1942, while the unit was designated an observation squadron. Eager beaver was in immediate trouble. The three cards he was holding; ace, duce, and five gave an indication of the identity of the unit he was representing. This was in violation of Air Force' regulations and had to be changed. The beaver was allowed to draw another hand, three aces. He holds the same hand today. Combat squadrons of the Air Force World War II, describes the emblem: "on a white disc, border black, a caricatured beaver in proper color, wearing a white shirt, blue coat and high silk hat, holding a swagger stick in the left hand and three aces in the right hand, spades, hearts, and diamonds, respectively". The only changes that has been made today's beaver has a yellow background.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 125 Observation Squadron was designated in December, 1940, at Tulsa, Oklahoma, the first air unit of the Oklahoma National Guard. Major Robert O. Lindsay was appointed commanding officer of the organization, with the key personnel of his staff including Capt. Henry C. Thompson, Capt. Lawler Reeves, Lt. Robert Andrews and Lt. Fred Q. Casler. At the time of designation the squadron strength was 116 men, all living in or near Tulsa.

The squadron was assigned O-47,O-38 and few liaison type planes, designed to fly at relatively slow speeds to permit crew members to perform the required missions, which were both visual and photographic observation of enemy activities and installations.

The organization was federalized January 31, 1941, at Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was called into active service September 15,1941, under the supervision of the 66th Observation Group. The first home base of the unit was at Post Field, Oklahoma, where the squadron worked in co-operation with the Field Artillery School. The L-type aircraft were primarily used to help the artillery adjust fire, while the observation aircraft were used to train troops in evading air attacks. The squadron remained at Post Field, until April 1942, at which time it was transferred to Brownwood Airport, Brownwood, Texas, under the supervision of the 77th Observation Group, Capt. Henry C. Thompson and Capt. Lawler Reeves were transferred to the 77th Observation Group.

The organization moved to Brownwood to train troops stationed at Camp Bowie and Camp Hood, Texas, in cooperation between ground troops and the air arm. It was at this time that the mission of the observation squadron began to change, the observation type aircraft being used not only for reconnaissance and photo missions, but also used to simulate bombardment and fighter planes. The O-47 and O-52 were found inefficient in modern warfare due to their lack of speed and firepower.

The squadron transferred to Abilene Municipal Airport, Texas, to carry out a co-operative training program with the ground troops stationed at Camp Barkley, Texas. The 77th Observation Group, to which the squadron belonged was in the II Air Support Command. The members of the squadron were given courses of instructions at Abilene in air support tactics as handed down by the group and the Air Support Command.

In August and September of 1942, the 125 Observation Squadron went to DeRidder, La., for maneuvers, where the members of the organization attempted to put into practice the air support theories that they had learned. Some pilot officers became air support party leaders working with the supported ground units as advisors with reference to the use of the air arm. Major Lindsay, the commanding officer, was taken from his squadron and worked with the supported corps. The ground forces gained some experience in working with air support, but the pilots, who were flying L-type aircraft, O-47s and O-52s, gained a minimum of experience in observation. Valuable experience was gained in setting up field installations, in maintaining camouflage discipline, and carrying on with a minimum of equipment.

The organization moved from the maneuver area back to Abilene, Texas, in October 1942, and continued to work in co-operation with the ground force units stationed at Camp Barkley. Major Lindsay, was transferred from the squadron in November of the same year becoming the base commander of Marshall Field, Fort Riley, Kansas. Capt. Albert J. McChristy assumed command.

In March of 1943 the squadron was moved to Abilene Army Air Base, Abilene, Texas, and on April 15, 1943, was redesignated as the 125 Liaison Squadron. Most of the officer pilots of the organization were transferred to the 77th Observation Group, which became the 77th Tactical Reconnaissance Group. These men were replaced by staff-sergeant liaison pilots. A liaison school was instituted under squadron supervision: The purpose of the school being to indoctrinate enlisted pilots with the purpose of the liaison squadron. During the course of training the following missions were carried out: courier, messenger, behind the line reconnaissance, column control, photographic, tracking and artillery adjustment. Upon completion of the course the liaison pilots were assigned to the squadron, becoming actively engaged in support missions for the ground force units stationed at Camp Barkley, Texas.

Captain McChristy was transferred to the 77th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, February 1943, when Major Lawler Reeves assumed command. Major Lawler Reeves remained in command until relieved by Captain Clad P. Christensen in March 1943. The liaison school was dissolved in July 1943, and 125 Liaison Squadron was transferred to Alamo Field, Texas, for the purpose of carrying on a co-operative training program with the organization of the 3rd Army, stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The 125 Liaison Squadron became a separate squadron, under direct supervision of the II Tactical Air Division, and was no longer affiliated with the 77th Gp.

Lt. Frederick H. Lenczyk, squadron operations officer, became squadron commander in August of 1943, when Capt. Christensen was transferred to B-17 training school at Sebring, Florida.

October 10, 1943, the 125 Liaison Squadron left Alamo Field for Thermal Army Air Field, Thermal, California, to take part in desert maneuvers. The organization was assigned to the III Tactical Air Division and was attached to the 76th Tactical Reconnaissance group for administrative purposes.

For the first maneuver which lasted from October 25, 1943, to November 11, 1943, the squadron was split up into small detachments to support the Blue Force and the Red Force, and to give assistance to the Umpires, 4th Corps Headquarters at Camp Young, Indio, California, and the III Tactical Air Division at Desert Center, California. The squadron was moved to Desert Center, California, where the commanding officer joined the detachment at the Bue Cp. All personnel gained experience in living out in the field, digging fox holes, moving from one landing strip to another in short notice, and maintained camouflage discipline. The pilots had a great deal of experience in short field landings and take-offs, in performance of the missions that they would be called on to do in combat, such as column control, courier, messenger, photographic, and behind the line reconnaissance.

The detachments operated as self supporting units. The commanding officer and his staff did not gain the experience of coordinating and administrating over these various detachments. The maneuver, from the standpoint of individual training, was not successful.

The 125 Liaison Squadron moved back to Thermal Army Air Field, November 1943, to set up a training program which would better enable the members of the organization to operate as a squadron in combat area. The organization became a separate squadron under direct supervision of the III Tactical Air Division on January 4, 1944, becoming no longer affiliated with the 76th Tactical Reconnaissance Group.

The squadron went on desert maneuvers for the second time in November 1943, being again split up into small detachments to support the ground units taking part in the maneuver, the 4th Corps, the III Tactical Air Division, the Directors Headquarters, and the Umpires. The squadron headquarters remained at Thermal Army Air Field, where the commanding officer and his staff coordinated and administered over the detachments out in the field. From the standpoint of both individual and squadron training the maneuver was most successful. The detachments moved back to the home base in December 1943, upon completion of the maneuver. The squadron resumed training and carried out missions for the III Tactical Air Division and for ground force units in the desert maneuver area.

A six week training program, for liaison squadron, as handed down by the Army Air Forces, began January 1944. The squadron was no longer required to take part in desert maneuvers.

Lt. Lenczyk, commanding officer, was promoted to captain, February 16, 1944.

We were stationed at Thermal, California, when the word came that we were alerted to go overseas. There was quite a bit of excitement when our commanding officer, Capt. Lenczyk

called us together and informed us that our training was completed and that we were to leave on the 15th of May, for an unknown destination. It was an open secret that the unknown destination was to be Fort Hamilton, New York.

Late in the afternoon of that day we lined up and marched to the station at Thermal. We were quite a bunch of GIs, all dressed up in OD's, steel helmets, and leggings. We sweated and waited for hours for the train. It was the first step of a journey that was to cover England, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. We spent four days traveling across the states, along hot dusty ride. It was a relief when we finally arrived at our destination, the port at Fort Hamilton, New York.

While there we were joined by our pilots who had gone to Savannah, Georgia, for briefing. After spending four days at the port being outfitted we were finally marched in full war regalia on the decks of the SS Louis Pasteur. Late that night of the 28th of May 1944, we sailed for Europe to do the job we had been training to do for months.

We arrived at the docks at Liverpool, England, on June 6, 1944. "D Day." Somehow the knowledge that the invasion had been made brought the war closer to us and we all became a little more serious. The first station in England for the squadron was Cheltenham, where the unit was assigned to ESSTAF, reassigned to the Ninth Air Force, and attached to Headquarters Command Etousa. We were billeted at Camp G just outside Cheltenham and while we were there only a short time we made our acquaintance with English pubs and English girls and English customs.

From Cheltenham we moved to Chedworth, and lived in Nissen huts. The field did not suit our purpose very well and on July 9th, 1944, the squadron moved to Erlestokes, England.

While here we were attached to the Ninth United States Army, and began to operate mail and passenger service. D" Flight was placed on D/S with the Southern Base Sector in Salisbury, England, and prior to their movement to the combat zone were awarded a commendation for the superior manner in which they performed their duties, by Brigadier General Thrasher. "A", "B" and "C" Flights were placed on D/S in France August 23, 1944. A" Flight worked with Com Z, "B" Flight worked with General Fattens Third Army and "D" Flight with General Bradley's Twelfth Army Group.

By this time the American armies in France had broken through the German lines at Caen, St. Lo and Perriers, had raced through from Avranches all the way across the Brittany Peninsula and laid siege to Brest. Other columns had swung north and after having encircled the Germans and allowed a small escape route at the Falaise Gap. Other elements had raced through to the borders of Belgium. The Southern Invasion was made, and the armies joined and it was at this time that we received orders to move to France. We left Erlestokes for the trip to Southampton about the 26th of August.

The 125 suffered its first casualties on Nov 11, 1944. Pilots Sgt William F Hunt and SSGT Fred

Stoeker took off from Heerlen, Holland and never returned.

On 15 Nov 1944, the 125 was transferred to the Twenty-ninth Tactical Air Command (Provisional), and two weeks later to the Ninth Fighter Command, which was a part of the former command. Seventeen days later, B Flight became the first unit of the squadron to operate on German soil when it established itself at Kornelimunster. Two weeks later, on 1 Jan 1945, staff sergeants William D. Fletcher and Owen Stafford were wounded when their aircraft, piloted by 1LT Donald K. Neill, was attacked by two ME-109s. Then on 12 Jan, TSG Jack S. Pridgen was injured in a crash near Heerlen in the Netherlands.

On 7 Mar the unit lost its last aircraft during the war, when SSG Richard J. Schempf and his passenger were forced to bail out at 4,000 feet because of inclement weather. Fortunately, neither man was injured.

The guardsmen continued to operate with the Twelfth Army Group until 8 June 1945 when the 125 was shifted to the Sixth Army Group. As the Allied armies continued to advance, so did the 125: first to Haltern, Germany, on 4 Apr, then to Gietersloh the following day, and finally, to Brunswick on 24 Apr. The unit was still at Brunswick on V-E Day, 8 May 1945. Although the 125 was transferred to the Twelfth Tactical Air Command as part of the Army of Occupation on 20 Jun 1945, and remained with the command until deactivation, they were attached to the headquarters command, U.S. Forces, European theater between 25 Jul and 15 Dec. During this period the unit moved first to Heidelberg and then to Frankfurt am Main.

Following the end of hostilities Gen Dwight Eisenhower called for the 125 to fly personal missions and serve his staff in Frankfurt, Germany. Shortly thereafter, orders for deactivation and return to stateside service were received.

For a period of ten days Sgt James A Taylor, a member of the squadron since its conception, was the only man in the unit. On Jan 10, 1946 the first Oklahoma Air National Guard unit was liquidated.

Not until December of 1947 was the unit reorganized. Under the command of Lt Col Joseph W Turner, the unit was given P-51.

The 125 Fighter Squadron, the direct descendant of the pre-war 125 Observation Squadron, was reorganized under the direction of LTC Joseph W. Turner. Based in Tulsa, the 125 was granted federal recognition on 15 Feb 1947. Originally the 125 both was equipped with the P-51D, which became known as the F-51 in 1948 was affectionately dubbed the "Spam can" by many of its pilots.

The decade ended with the unit enjoying expansion on the west edge of the Tulsa Municipal Airport with the jet age just around the corner.

The Fifties were to start a new era for the Tulsa Air National Guard. No sooner had the year

started than it was announced that the 125 Fighter Squadron would receive F-84 to replace the P-51's by April.

Tulsa pilots began training quickly for the transition at Vance Air Force Base, Enid in March of 1950. Civil leaders in Tulsa had already planned a big Defense Day parade for May and now hoped to make the F-84's their star attraction. Excitement continued to build as the arrival date drew nearer. March and April passed and still the jets weren't delivered. Parade officials became squeamish as Defense Day grew nearer. The first of the plane finally arrived on Thursday, May 18, the day of the parade. The arrival of the two jets was not without incident. One of the jets crash landed and was heavily damaged when the nose gear failed to lock. Still one jet was better than none and on the following Sunday, 2500 Tulsans turned out at an open house at the guard base to get their first glimpse of a jet fighter.

Tulsa Guardsmen began concentrating on training now as the remainder of the 25 F-84s were delivered. An outbreak in Korea started rumors that the unit was to be activated but June passed with no call-up.

On 10 Oct of that year Tulsa's 125 Fighter Bomber Squadron, now under the command of Major Staryl C. Auston, Jr., was federalized. The 125 was sent first, in Nov, to Alexandria AFB, LA, along with the 137th Fighter Group, for duty with the Tactical Air Command. It was planned for the Oklahoma air guardsmen to participate in field problems with the state's Forty-fifth Infantry Division. The old base had been deserted since the end of World War II and extensive renovation was needed to house the 2,000 men who were to make up the 137th Fighter Bomber Wing. By December the bulk of the 125 was stationed in Alexandria. Later, in May, 1952, the unit was moved to Chaumont, France, where it completed its tour of active duty.

Pilots from the 125 saw action on a rotating basis. Capt Harry Underwood of the 125 became the first ANG pilot to get a confirmed 'kill' as he shot down a North Korean MIG in 1951.

When the 125 Fighter Bomber Squadron was released from active duty and returned to state control in Jul of 1952, its F-84s were initially replaced with F-51s. Then, through the summer and the fall of that year, the 125 also began receiving F-80s. At about that same time the 138th group was organized in Tulsa to provide immediate command and logistical support for the fighter-bomber squadron.

On 1 Aug 1957, the 125 Fighter Bomber Squadron's Shooting Stars were replaced by the F-86D. After becoming combat ready in the aircraft, the unit was placed on 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week alert. Once equipped with the "Dogs," the Oklahoma guardsmen began to conduct their summer training camps at Gulf port, Mississippi, where they could actually fire the rockets in special ranges over the Gulf of Mexico.

In January 1960, a complete change of mission resulted from the decision of an AD HOC committee of United States Air Force and Air National Guard personnel to assign C-97 to the Air National Guard with the object of supporting the military air transport service with its strategic

airlift. On 15 January 1960, the 125 Fighter Squadron was converted to an Air Transport Squadron and equipped with the C-97; the remainder of the 138th group units were converted to

air transport units on 1 September 1960. Still based at Tulsa, the unit was brought under the operational control of MATS and was assigned to the 137th Air Transport Wing (H) at Oklahoma City. In August 1961, the 138th Air Transport Group (H) was reassigned to the 146th Air Transport Wing (H), ANG, Van Nuys, California.

On 1 October 1961, the 138th group was ordered into active military service at Tulsa, Oklahoma, where it remained based. It was commanded by Lt Col Gerald W. Stevenson. The unit consisted of group headquarters and five component units, including the 125 Air Transport Squadron (H) commanded by Major Edmund G. Hepner. Assigned to the 146th Air Transport Wing (H) (MATS), the Tulsa unit provided airlift for the Western Transport Air Force (MATS) being relieved from active duty on 31 August 1962.

The first air National Guard around the world flight began on Nov. 12, 1962. The C-97 "Bovine Boeing" took off from Tulsa enroute to Kabul, Afghanistan. Its mission was to deliver 14 prize breeding cattle to improve the beef herds of this tiny country. Maj. Slane, in command of this mission, said "A trip like this may seem a waste to some people, but we have done more for a little nation and for diplomatic relations, than all the dams, roads, airports or technical (expensive) things in the past have done. These people appreciate cattle because it is something they understand." The mission took its crew from Tulsa to McGuire AFB, Acores, Wheelus AFB, Adanna AFB, Kabul, Lahore, New Delhi, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Wake Island, Hawaii, Travis AFB and back to Tulsa in 14 days. Their 100 in flight hours took them on routes that had never before been flown by American aircraft. While in Kabul, Ambassador John N. Steeves was presented one of the guard heritage paintings to be hung in the ambassadorial dwelling. Despite air conditioner failures, restless cattle, problems concerning diplomatic clearance and radio breakdowns, the mission was considered, by all, a success.

The unit converted from C-97 aircraft to C-124 aircraft in February 1968. The Oklahomans flew several missions involving cargo too large for anything but a Globemaster to DEW-line installations along the Arctic Circle where primitive landing strips ruled out using the C-5s.

The Flight of 999

"On approximately 11 or 21 Nov 1970, we left Tulsa with a crew of eight (8) in a C-124C aircraft, tail no. 999. Our mission was to fly from Tulsa to Travis AFB, CA; Hickam AFB, HI; Wake Island; Yokota AB, Japan and return. The crew consisted of:

Lt. Col. Bobby E. Walls Aircraft Commander/Pilot

Major David L Hall 1st Pilot/Pilot

Major Donald B. Durbin 2nd Pilot/Co-pilot

Lt. Lisenby Navigator

MSgt William D. Shephard 1st Engineer

TSgt Nelvin Hankins 2nd Engineer

SSgt Frank Blair Loadmaster

SSgt Philip Cowan Loadmaster

We had trouble along the way, and we were going to be running late on return to Tulsa. Several crew-members were not Air Tech (full-time) so we needed to get back so they could get to their civilian jobs by Monday. Upon arrival at Yokota AB, we asked about our out-bound cargo and they stated that they had very little for us.

We then asked for them (ACP) to request routing for an over-fly of Midway Island into Hickam. If the winds were favorable we could make it non-stop to Hickam and catch up on our schedule. If needed, we could land at Midway for a fire-ball into Hickam. After spending our allotted ground time (I think around 48 hours) we arrived at operations about 2300 hrs. As advertised, the aircraft had a short fuel load for Wake Island, not as requested. I asked the ACP controller to initiate the request again and ask for an expedited answer.

After about two hours the request was granted—if no cargo space was needed for the flight. Yokota had about 500# [pounds] so we asked for an onload of the cargo plus a full load of fuel for the leg to Hickam. Winds were favorable. After all this jacking around we finally got ready to go to the aircraft. When we arrived there we had a C-141 parked in front of us on-loading cargo. This delayed us to the point that we were going to have a crew duty time problem. We finally got ACP to get them moved. I thought about this time that the flight Gods did not want us to fly that night and I did think about a cancel. Things did work out and we leaped into the murky black. About 4 hrs and 50 minutes into the flight I told Dave Hall that he had the watch as I was going back and eat my flight lunch.

I had just sat down to eat when the engineer (Hankins) stated that we were losing engine #2.1 put my lunch aside and started getting into my flotation gear (I can't swim a lick). Before I could get into it and into the left seat the engineer stated that we were losing engine #3 (this makes BOTH inboards). I then started putting on ANOTHER flotation gear. By this time Bill Shephard had arrived on deck, so he took the engineer's seat and I took over the pilot's position with Dave Hall in the right seat. We contacted Fuchu airways for primary radio control and for emergency assistance. We, of course, immediately started losing altitude from 9000 ft. Fuchu cleared all altitudes below us. The rest of the crew not engaged in the actual emergency started gathering gear to throw over-board.

They opened the elevator doors, removed the elevator from the hole and proceeded to dump cargo. We had an engine trailer on board, the largest item, and had Hell getting rid of it. It had stuck in the elevator hole and we had nothing except a wooden stick to pry with. At about 1500 ft we passed over some type of fairly large ship. After passing by it I had just about decided to ditch. We tried to contact the ship but no luck. After I mentioned ditching, Hall, Shephard and some of the others confessed that they weren't too good in the swimming department. After a consultation, I decided to press on. We finally got rid of the trailer at about 400 ft above the water.

We were then able to maintain some semblance of flying speed. Bill Shephard and I had been fighting with the throttles for about 30 minutes—I would push them full forward and he would look at the temperature and pull them back some. We finally got a C-141 for RESCAP and they escorted us to Marcus Island. While enroute to Marcus we talked to an Air America aircraft inbound to Marcus. The captain talked with us, advised of the reef around the island and how hard it was to see. He stated that after we landed that he would land, off-load, pick us up and take us back to Yokota. We finally found the island.

Now, with both engines out on the inboard, all we had was emergency hydraulics from an electric pump—not much. We could only get about 10% of the flaps available and had only two applications of the brakes— and reverse. All this on an island with the runway stopping at the water on both ends and only a little over 4000 ft. available. The Air America captain was right. The dike was difficult to see—as a matter of fact, I never did see it until after I got out of the aircraft—but I hit it with the main gears. I wanted to put that sucker down on the very first brick available, and I did.

We got it stopped in minimum distance, backed off into a revetment (after installing the gear pins so that the gear wouldn't collapse after the impact with the dike). Air America landed, picked us up and delivered us back to Yokota. Of course, we had a hell of a lot of paper work to fill out. Also, everyone had tossed all their gear, except minimum personal baggage, overboard so claims had to be made for that. A lot of Christmas shopping had to be re-accomplished and we were put aboard a C-141 for Hickam-Travis. MAC had a lot of questions to ask and we answered them, but not all to their satisfaction. My recommendation to all was (1) that nobody try that long of a flight again. Fuel cannot be dumped in case of emergency. (2) that all cargo aircraft have several iron pry-bars aboard."

The 125 reassumed its role in the tactical fighter business in October 1972, with the assignment of T-33 aircraft in preparation for F-100 conversion. It was federally reorganized as the 138th Tactical Fighter Group on 25 January 1973.

The unit converted to A-7D receiving the first A-7D in April 1978, officially converting 1 July 1978, and became C-3 operational ready 15 December 1978.

The Oklahoma Air Guard at Tuba International Airport flew to the United Kingdom April 13-27 for training with military units of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The purpose of the mission was to familiarize air crews and support people with overseas operating bases, areas and procedures. A dozen A-7D from the Oklahoma Air Guard's 138th Tactical Fighter Group flew nonstop across the Atlantic to the Royal Air Force Base in Wittering, Northeast of London. The fighters were refueled in flight by Strategic Air Command Tankers.

The Military Airlift Command transported 305 maintenance and support personnel and their equipment for the exercise named Coronet Barracuda.

The short-term tactical mission was part of a larger program called Checkered Flag, in which U.S. based tactical air units go to Europe, Alaska and the Pacific.

During the 1990s the 137th Airlift Wing participated in operations against foreign illegal drug dealers. Following the Oklahoma City bombing in April 1995, Air Guardsmen provided site security and medical, rescue, and recovery personnel. In spring 1993 the 138th Tactical Fighter Group began flying F-16 aircraft, the Air Force's most advanced fighter. The 137th Airlift Wing provided operational support during the 1991 Gulf War, and contributed logistical assistance in Bosnia in the late 1990s. Between 1996 and 2000 the 138th Fighter Wing deployed F-16C aircraft and crew to enforce Iraq's Northern No Fly Zone. Other personnel were dispatched to

the Middle East to repair equipment used in Operation Desert Storm.

Air Guard Provides Top Cover for Iraq Withdrawal: The 125 Expeditionary Fighter Squadron recently arrived in Iraq to provide top cover for US forces as they complete their withdrawal from the country. The F-16 unit is comprised of Air National Guard pilots, maintainers, and support personnel from Arizona, Ohio, and Oklahoma. "We're providing close air support for more than 40,000 troops leaving Iraq by the end of the year," said Lt. Col. Rick Poplin, 125 EFS commander. "During this historic undertaking to re-posture personnel, equipment, and bases, force protection remains inherent in every operation we undertake." Maj. Gen. Russ Handy, commander of the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Iraq, said this mission is helping to ensure that "every US service member and civilian transitions safely out of Iraq and on to their next challenge or home to their loved ones." 2011

On 12 October 2000, at 1427L (1927 Zulu), an F-16CG, S/N 89-2088, crashed 33 statute miles south/southeast of McConnell AFB, Kansas. The F-16CG, assigned to the 125 FS, 138 FW, Tulsa IAP, was part of a two-versus-four (2V4) air-to-air continuation training mission. The mishap pilot (MP) ejected safely. Following the ejection the MP was examined at SouthCrest Hospital, Tulsa, and released with minor injuries. Impact was in prairie grazing land, resulting in minimal damage to private property and no casualties. Shortly before impact, the mishap aircraft (MA) experienced severe engine roughness and an audible bang, followed by rapid engine RPM decay and engine failure. The MP immediately turned the aircraft toward the closest emergency airfield, which was beyond safe gliding distance. Following two unsuccessful engine restart attempts, the wingman reported the MA on fire and the MP ejected. The MA was completely destroyed upon impact. The MP was promptly and safely recovered by local fire department personnel. The primary cause of the mishap was the catastrophic failure of the number three bearing assembly, resulting in engine seizure. There is clear and convincing evidence to indicate that the number three bearing assembly was damaged during depot-level maintenance build-up, resulting in failure of the bearing rear inner race during engine operations. Ultimately the bearing race failure resulted in complete bearing assembly failure and engine seizure.

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Sources

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