

198 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

463 Fighter Squadron constituted, 5 Oct 1944

Activated, 12 Oct 1944

Inactivated, 27 May 1946

Reconstituted and redesignated 198 Fighter Squadron and allotted to PR NG, 24 May 1946

198 Fighter Squadron (SE) extended federal recognition, 23 Nov 1947

Redesignated 198 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 15 Aug 1952

Redesignated 198 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 16 Nov 1952

Redesignated 198 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Apr 1964

Redesignated 198 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

Redesignated 198 Airlift Squadron, 1 Oct 1998

Inactivated, 31 Dec 2019

STATIONS

Peterson Field, CO

Bruning AAFld, Neb, 20 Oct 1944

Dalhart AAFld, Tex, 15 Dec 1944-30 Apr 1945

Ie Shima, 24 Jun 1945

Yontan, Okinawa, 29 Jan-27 May 1946

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Muniz ANG, Carolina, Puerto Rico

ASSIGNMENTS

507 Fighter Group, 12 Oct 1944-27 May 1946

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-47N, 1944

F-47N, 1947

F-86

F-104C

F-104D

A-7D, 1975

F-16A/B

C-130



(ANG photo)

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Japan

Western Pacific

Ryukyus

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation: Korea, 13 Aug 1945

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

Bucaneros

OPERATIONS

Combat in Western Pacific, 1 Jul 1945-14 Aug 1945

In August of 1948, the 198 Fighter Squadron, Puerto Rico ANG, conducted summer field training at Ramey AFB, and in September Mrs. Howard K. Ramey, widow of the officer for whom Ramey AFB was named, participated in an official dedication ceremony at the base with Col. Breitweiser.

The 198 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, Puerto Rico ANG, had its summer encampment at Ramey AFB from July 24th through August 7th. 1955

Based at San Juan International Airport, the 198 FIS converted from F-86E to F-86Ds in February 1959. The new aircraft were gained from McClellan AFB and the 182nd FIS, Texas ANG. Most of the pilots with the 198 FIS were Puerto Rican, with the balance made up of Americans. The maintenance personnel, again mainly of local descent, were trained in the U.S. like other guard units. One of the first aircraft to arrive, 51-8422, was lost almost immediately. In one of the more bizarre accidents, a land crab crawled into the left main undercarriage bay and prevented the gear from extending on landing.

More extraordinary was the case of 52-3893. The pilot of '893 was returning from the U.S. on 15 August 1959 and, low on fuel over Cuba, tried to make for the US base at Guantanamo. He ran dry before reaching safety and was forced to land the aircraft in a sugar cane plantation in the province of Chaparra. Understandably, the Cuban authorities were less than happy about the incident, although a team of 4 mechanics from the PR ANG did manage to dismantle the aircraft and put it in a railroad car. 893 was never seen again. The pilot returned to Puerto Rico and continued to fly for the PR ANG for some time after this.

The 156th Fighter Group (Air Defense), of Puerto Rico, ANG, equipped with F-86H, held summer encampment at the base from July 30 to Aug 13. Also in August, the remaining power generators were back in operation, and the base power situation returned to normal. Construction was begun on an Instrument Landing System (ILS) facility for the base. 1961

The squadron lost three F-86Hs: 53-1371, 1291, and 1323. 1371 was lost on 30 August 1961 as a result of an unrecoverable spin. The pilot ejected safely. 1291 was lost on 16 September 1961 as a result of an inflight fire. The pilot ejected safely. 1323 and its pilot were lost on 26 September 1962 as a result of a crash at sea.

In a well-planned and executed operation, an unknown number of Puerto Rican nationalists, the Macheteros, slipped through a hole in the fence at Muniz Air National Guard Base (San Juan, Puerto Rico) on January 12, 1981, and planted satchel charges on 11 aircraft. The

Macheteros then escaped without detection. Sixty minutes later, the charges blew, destroying eight A-7Ds and damaging two. Two A-7s escaped damage because the satchel charges placed on them were duds. One non-operational F-104 on display was also destroyed. Three unexploded bombs found on other aircraft. Total damage estimated at \$45 million. Guard force consisted of one man at gate, another patrolling the perimeter.

On March 17, 1991 terrorists struck Muniz Airport, setting fire to one A-7 aircraft and causing \$100,000 in damage.

For the first deployment after converting to the F-16 Puerto Rico's 156 fighter group ventured south to Paraguay in September. The 156 based Muniz ANG base sent five of their F-16s on the 3000 mile seven-hour flight to Asuncion, the capital of the Republic of Paraguay. The group was accompanied by two KC-135 tankers from the Wisconsin air National Guard the route took them over the Netherlands Antilles, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. The deployment was part of an exercise called JOPARA 93. The 156 flew a variety of combined missions in exercise including interdiction, close air support and dissimilar air combat tactics with the Paraguayan Air Force. The 156th F-16B was used extensively to fly local dignitaries and Paraguayan pilots who returned the favor of the several other visiting air National Guard pilots. Exercise was extremely successful according to Lieut. Col. Manuel Guzman the commander of the 156 fighter group. Experiences like this will help build confidence in our new weapons system he said and our aircrews had a chance to evaluate all the training that they had been doing since converting to the F-16. Guzman said the deployment also served to demonstrate Puerto Rico air National Guard's continuing role as a goodwill ambassador in Latin America. Our units ability to share a common language is of great help advancing good relations with our neighbors to the south.

September 1998. After Hurricane Georges ripped across their island destroying some 26,000 houses, members of the Puerto Rico Air Guard's 156th Airlift Wing flew tons of food, water, equipment and supplies to remote parts of the storm-stricken island. The unit was in the middle of converting from fighters to airlifters and had two of its planned eight C-130Hs on hand to deal with that natural disaster.

8 September 2006. The Puerto Rico Air Guard's 156th Airlift Wing deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. It was the first time the island's ANG had deployed to a war zone as a unit in its 59-year history. While the 156th was committed to a 120-day deployment, its individual members were slated to rotate out every 30 days.

The 156th Airlift Wing deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan, on 8 September to mark the first time the wing, which flies C-130Es, deployed to a war zone as a unit. So many unit personnel volunteered to deploy to Operation Enduring Freedom that the wing had to restrict the deployment length to one month to give all volunteers a chance to serve. Although the members will rotate out every thirty days, the unit is committed to a 120-day deployment.



(ANG photo)



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USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

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