



FACT SHEET

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

154th TACTICAL AIRLIFT TRAINING SQUADRON Arkansas Air National Guard

The 154th Tactical Airlift Training Squadron (TATS) of the Arkansas Air National Guard is based at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas. It is the flying squadron of the 189th Tactical Airlift Group (TAG). Its primary mission is initial aircrew training in the C-130 Hercules aircraft for the Department of Defense. Its students come from all branches of the service plus allied nations that fly the C-130. The squadron flies the initial qualification, requalification, and aircraft commander and aircrew training on the C-130 aircraft. It also flies other missions as directed by the National Guard Bureau and the Military Airlift Command.

As a unit of the Air National Guard, the 154th TATS is responsible to both the federal and state governments. In peacetime, it is commanded by the governor of the state of Arkansas through the State Adjutant General. When mobilized by the federal government, the 154th TATS becomes a part of the Military Airlift Command of the United States Air Force.

The 154th TATS can trace its lineage back to the 154th Aero Squadron, which was organized at Kelly Field, Texas, on December 8, 1917. During World War I, the squadron repaired and maintained American Expeditionary Forces aircraft in England and France. The unit received two battle streamers for its service during the war. It was demobilized in February of 1919.

The 154th re-emerged on October 24, 1925, when President Calvin Coolidge gave the unit federal recognition as the 154th Observation Squadron, Corps Aviation, Arkansas National Guard. The 154th was then equipped with Curtis JN4 Jennies and was based at Adams Field in Little Rock.

On September 16, 1940, the 154th Observation Squadron became one of the first four air units of the National Guard to be called to active duty in anticipation of World War II. Upon mobilization, the unit was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Augusta, Georgia, and then Eglin Field, Florida, before taking part in twelve campaigns in the European Theatre of Operations. The 154th was assigned to England, North Africa, Italy and France during the war. It flew 1,495 missions and 2,522 sorties during the war. Twenty-two members of the unit were killed in action. The 154th received its first Distinguished Unit Citation for its involvement in the Ploesti Oil Field raids in Rumania which crippled the Axis' fuel supply.

The 154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron was flying combat sorties out of Bari, Italy, up to VE Day, and was demobilized on December 12, 1945. Again, the unit returned home to Adams Field and the Arkansas National Guard.

The 154th was granted extended federal recognition on August 24, 1946, and was equipped with the P-51 Mustang. It's peacetime tenure was short as the unit was called to active duty for the Korean Conflict on October 10, 1950.

The 154th joined with two Texas Air National Guard squadrons at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, to form the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing, the only all Air National Guard unit in Korea during that conflict. The wing was equipped with RF-84 Thunderjets prior to being stationed first at Itazuke Air Base, Japan, and then at Taegu Air Base, Korea, to fly combat missions.

During that war, the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing, of which the 154th was a part, completed 5,000 combat missions on October 31, 1951. The wing completed its 10,000th mission less than three months later. After being credited with being the outstanding fighter-bomber unit in Korea, the 136th completed its 21 months of active duty on July 9, 1952. The unit received three battle streamers for its participation in the conflict, bringing its total to 16, the most of any Air National Guard unit in the nation.

After the Korean Conflict, the 154th returned to Adams Field and the P-51 Mustang it flew after World War II. In 1954, the unit returned to the jet age when it was assigned RF-80's. By 1958, the 154th began flying the RB-57.

A big change occurred when the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron left Adams Field and made the short move in October, 1962, to Little Rock Air Force Base at nearby Jacksonville. The unit became a part of the newly designated 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group.

The 154th remained in the reconnaissance business but joined the supersonic age in 1965 with the arrival of the first RF-101 Voodoo. The unit was just getting used to its new aircraft when it was again called to active duty for the Pueblo Crisis in January, 1968. The 154th was sent back to Itazuke Air Base, Japan, for the eleven months it remained mobilized.

The 154th left the reconnaissance mission behind in 1975 when it became the first Air National Guard unit to become a part of the Strategic Air Command. Eight KC-135 Stratotankers arrived at Little Rock Air Force Base as the 154th began manning an alert aircraft 24 hours a day, 365 days a year as part of the aerial refueling mission of the command. The 154th flew that mission around the world for eleven years before it became the 154th Tactical Airlift Training Squadron on October 1, 1986, flying the C-130 Hercules that it flies today.

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