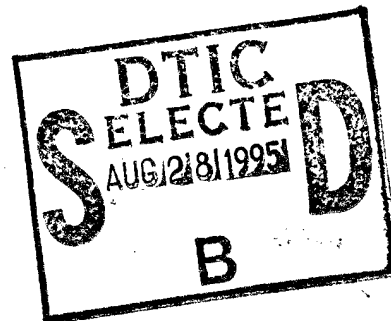


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CASE STUDIES IN RESERVE COMPONENT VOLUNTEERISM:  
THE 175th FIGHTER GROUP, MARYLAND NATIONAL GUARD,  
OVER BOSNIA

John R. Brinkerhoff  
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May 1995



*Prepared for*  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs)

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## PREFACE

This document was prepared by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs) under a task entitled "Reserve Component Volunteerism." The objectives of the task are to determine the extent to which Reserve volunteers can support national military strategy, to identify the mission areas where Reserve volunteers can be most effectively employed, to assess the adequacy of legal justification and policy guidance for planning and programming Reserve volunteers for operational missions, and to suggest additional legislative initiatives for policy revisions that may be needed to assure access to Reserve volunteers. To achieve those objectives, IDA consulted published works and official documents and interviewed individuals involved in recent instances in which Reserve volunteers were used to perform operational missions. This document is one of a series of case studies that resulted from that research.

This document was reviewed for accuracy by some of those who were interviewed. It did not undergo internal IDA review.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

On Friday, 5 August 1994, Captain Mike Theisen and First Lieutenant Ed Jones of the Maryland Air National Guard flew A-10 aircraft in an attack on Bosnian Serb positions near Sarajevo in retaliation for Serbian provocations, including the seizure of four heavily armored vehicles from a United Nations (UN) compound.<sup>1</sup> Acting under NATO orders, the two Air Guard pilots fired 600 rounds of 30mm ammunition into the target area, destroying one Serbian tank. This first use of NATO air power caused the Serb leaders to back down and promise to return the UN equipment [2 and 3].

Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones were volunteers serving as part of a Rainbow Detachment of twelve A-10 aircraft (half from the Air National Guard and half from the Air Force Reserve) formed by the 175th Fighter Group, Maryland National Guard. From 13 July through 13 September 1994, the 175th Rainbow Detachment was based at Aviano Air Base, Italy, taking the place of the 510th Fighter Squadron, an active Air Force A-10 unit from Spangdahlem, Germany, that had to go to Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, for training.<sup>2</sup>

The 175th Rainbow Detachment was part of Operation Deny Flight operated by NATO to monitor compliance with the UN ban on flight of fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft in a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Operation Deny Flight started in April 1993 to enforce UN Security Council resolutions that called for strong measures and air strikes against those responsible for interference with the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo [4]. Deny Flight is a counterpart to Operation Provide Promise—the United Nations support of humanitarian relief efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Deny Flight was accomplished by air forces of several NATO nations, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Turkey, and Denmark. The operation was carried out by flying patrols over the Bosnia-Herzegovina Area of Operation to locate, identify, and warn away hostile flights by the belligerents. The United States' contribution to Deny Flight was commanded by the 16th Air Force, located at Aviano Air Base, Italy, with the major operational element being the 31st Fighter Wing, also located at Aviano Air Base. Operational Control was exercised by the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force from the NATO Consolidated Air Operations Center (CAOC) located at Vincenzo, a short distance from

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<sup>1</sup> Identity of the two pilots and much of the information in this paper was obtained from [1].

<sup>2</sup> Some confusion arose about the designation of the unit that the 175th Rainbow Detachment replaced because many units were being redesignated at the time. The 510th ended up as an F-16 unit and the 492nd Fighter Squadron went to Nevada.

Aviano. Squadrons of F-16 and A-10 fighter aircraft were rotated to Aviano to fly combat patrol missions over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Most of these squadrons were active Air Force from Germany, but sometimes the missions were flown by Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve personnel organized into volunteer Rainbow Detachments. The use of Air Reserve Component detachments allowed the Active Air Force to give the active-duty personnel a break for required training or simply to go home and see their families.

A Rainbow Detachment is a temporary organization formed by fitting together sets of volunteers—subelements—from several larger organizations to perform a specific mission for a specific duration. One major organization at wing or group level is tasked with forming a Rainbow Detachment by putting together the elements from other units into a workable unit. The Air Force uses these Rainbow Detachments to help the Active Air Force sustain a high level of peacetime operations within constrained strength and funding levels. In this case, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve volunteers were flying operational missions in support of U.S. foreign policy that, as in this case, could be transformed instantly into real combat. The success of the combat mission on 5 August 1994 and of the entire Rainbow Detachment concept illustrates well how Reserve volunteerism can help the active component in periods of scarce resources and increasing demands.

## **B. THE 175TH FIGHTER GROUP**

The 175th Fighter Group, with 18 A-10 aircraft is one of the two major organizations in the Maryland Air National Guard. The other is the 135th Tactical Airlift Group, equipped with 8 C-130E aircraft.

Both of these organizations are stationed at Warfield Air National Guard Base, at the Martin State Airport, just east of Baltimore, Maryland. The 175th Fighter Group serves as the host; the 135th Airlift Group is a tenant; and the two organizations share in a combined full-time operation to operate the base and provide common services [5].

The mission of the 175th Fighter Group is “to organize, train and equip assigned personnel to provide an operationally ready Fighter Group for specific and contingency tasking [5].”

The 175th Tactical Fighter Group is organized to provide a full range of support for its combat element—the 104th Fighter Squadron with its 18 A-10 “Thunderbolt II” aircraft and 32 pilots. The rest of the 175th Fighter Group provides other capabilities needed to keep the aircraft and pilots flying. The group is organized into three subordinate groups:

operations, logistics, and support. The Operations Group includes the 104th Fighter Squadron and an operational support squadron. The Logistics Group includes an aircraft generation squadron, a maintenance squadron, and a logistics squadron. The Support Group includes a civil engineering squadron, a security police squadron, munitions flight, communications flight, and services flight. There is also a medical squadron. With these supporting elements, the fighter group is relatively self-supporting and can move intact to another airfield and go into operation, relying on Air Force systems for supplies, fuel, munitions, and parts. Or, as in this case, a part of the group can be deployed to operate as part of an Air Force wing that provides some support [5 and 6].<sup>3</sup>

The 175th Fighter Group had a strength of 960 personnel on 1 October 1994—about 26 percent of which were full-time personnel. Full-time personnel are important to the readiness of the group. Eight of the 15 command positions in the group, including the group commander and vice commander, are full-time technicians. Other key staff and support positions are also occupied by full-time technicians, who perform the day-to-day work of running the group and provide the basic training for the traditional Guardsmen.<sup>4</sup> The detailed breakdown is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Personnel Strength of the 175th Fighter Group**

Personnel	Full-Time Support	Traditional Guardsmen	Total
Officer	20	84	104
Enlisted	<u>232</u>	<u>624</u>	<u>856</u>
Total	252	708	960

The 175th Fighter Group traces its lineage from the 104th Observation Squadron, which was formed in 1921 as a flying unit of the Maryland National Guard. The 104th was called to active duty for World War II and, as the 517th Bombardment Squadron, flew anti-submarine missions over the Atlantic Ocean with Douglas B-18 and North American B-25 aircraft. In 1946, the unit was reconstituted as the 104th Fighter Squadron, and in 1948 it was assigned to the newly formed Air National Guard. The unit was equipped with P-47

<sup>3</sup> The “group” organization survives only in the Air National Guard (ANG); the rest of the Air Force uses the “wing” organization, which is larger and less likely to deploy intact. According to Colonel Bruce F. Tuxill, Assistant Adjutant General for Air of Maryland, the remaining ANG groups are likely to be converted to wings in the near future. The current organization of the 175th Fighter Group, with its three subordinate groups resembles a wing.

<sup>4</sup> This is the term preferred by the National Guard to refer to Selected Reservists who train on a part-time basis and usually (but not always) have full-time civilian jobs. The general term for these personnel is “drilling reservist.”

Thunderbolts from 1947 until 1951, when it transitioned to F-51 Mustangs. In 1955, the 104th entered the jet age and was issued F-86 Sabre Jets as the Air Force modernized its fighter fleet. In 1962, the 104th Fighter Squadron became part of the 175th Tactical Fighter Group. Elements of the 175th were called to active duty in May 1968 for the Vietnam War and served at Cannon Air Force Base, Nevada, until December of that year. In 1970, the group changed to A-37B Dragonfly aircraft, and in 1979 to the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, manufactured by the Fairchild Company, Hagerstown, Maryland [6, historical summary, and 7]. The A-10 is a rugged aircraft designed to provide close air support for the Army, and the 175th Fighter Group has excelled in flying this aircraft.

The 175th has always been busy during its long history, participating in exercises, air shows, and training flights, but it has been particularly busy for the past few years. Many of these missions involved deployment of A-10 aircraft for operational training or operational support, such as deployments to Camp Drum, New York (1990, 1991, 1992), firing; Germany (1990), Canada (1993), and bases in CONUS (1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993), as well as participation in Red Flag (1992). The medical squadron, civil engineering squadron, communications flight, and other group elements deployed to Alaska, Germany, and CONUS locations for operational training. All this was done in addition to training and undergoing various operational readiness inspections. Appendix A is a list of the major activities of the 175th over the past five years.

One measure of the readiness of a fighter unit is the rated ability of its pilots. As of 1 December 1994, the 104th/175th had 35 pilots rated mission ready, one rated mission capable, and one rated mission qualified. Six pilots had the highest rating, meaning that they were fully capable of the full range of operational missions that could be undertaken by the A-10. The high quality of the pilots is due to their training and experience. The average pilot in the 175th Fighter Group had 2,199 hours of flight time, 1,840 of which was in fighter aircraft and 1,443 of which was in A-10s. Fourteen of the group's pilots had combat experience. Most of the pilots had prior active-duty service; about half were airline pilots in their civilian jobs, and a third were full-time personnel [5].

Another area in which the 175th does well is in aircraft maintenance. The ability of the group to keep the A-10s flying is due both to the length of time the unit has been using that aircraft (15 years) and to the experience of the maintenance personnel. Officers and senior noncommissioned officers (E-7 and above) had an average of 20 years of maintenance experience. Junior enlisted personnel averaged from 9 years (guardsmen) to 12 years (technicians) of experience. This experience helped the 175th achieve a cumulative mission capable rate in fiscal years 1993 and 1994 of 81 percent—well over the National

Guard standard of 76 percent and just below the Air Combat Command standard of 85 percent. This was done with a one-shift operation.

The group has been recognized for its accomplishments. The 175th Fighter Group won the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 1990, 1992, and 1994. In 1992, the medical squadron won five awards for excellence, including the Theodore P. Marrs Award as best medical unit in the Air Reserve Components. In 1991, the 175th won the "Gunsmoke" USAF Worldwide Gunnery Competition against 14 other fighter squadrons from the Air Force, Air National Guard (ANG), and Air Force Reserve (AFRES), and was recognized as the best in the Air Force. Finally, in April 1994, the 175th was given an outstanding rating in its Operational Readiness Inspection conducted at Savannah, Georgia.

In 1993, two A-10s of the 175th deployed to Aviano Air Base to participate in Operation Deny Flight as part of a Rainbow Detachment headed by the 301st Operations Group of the Air Force Reserve. The 175th provided two 30-day shifts with 21 volunteers for each of two rotations from 15 November 1993 to 16 December 1993, and from 15 December 1993 to 16 January 1994, respectively. Volunteers from the 175th joined volunteers from other ANG elements under the leadership of the 103rd Fighter Group, Connecticut National Guard [8 and 9]. This operation included both F-16 and A-10 aircraft. The AFRES F-16 personnel rotated at 2-week intervals, and the AFRES A-10 personnel at 20-day intervals. The ANG A-10 personnel rotated at 30-day intervals [10]. Many of the 175th personnel on this operation, including Captain Mike Theisen (who has since been promoted to Major), Captain Billy Smith, Captain Tom Harriatt, and Lieutenant Ed Jones played an important role in planning and implementing the next Deny Flight operation [11]. This experience gave the personnel of the 175th a taste of the problems they would encounter when it became their turn to organize, manage, and lead a similar Rainbow Detachment rotation for Deny Flight later in 1994.

### **C. THE CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

In the spring of 1994, the Air National Guard Operations Center, Andrews Air Force Base, started sending "what if" questions to the 175th Fighter Group. A message would come asking if the group could support an operation here or there and how it would do that. The leaders of the 175th took these questions seriously because they knew that the questions were part of the planning process to be certain that there would be no big surprises. So in the spring of 1994, the group had some awareness that it might be asked to participate once again in Operation Deny Flight. Group members had considered what had happened during the previous rotation and how they would do the job if asked.

Early in April 1994, the 175th Fighter Group was asked if it would agree to form a Rainbow Detachment to provide A-10 support for Deny Flight from 15 July to 13 September 1994. United States Air Force Europe (USAFE) had requested Air Combat Command (ACC) to provide 12 A-10s during that period. The ACC passed the requirement to the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve, with the guidance that the requirement would be met equally by each component and that this time the Air National Guard would have the lead. In turn, the Air National Guard Operations Center, Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, consulted its unit roster and decided that 175th was ready and due for the mission. The 175th Fighter Group and the other prospective participants in the operation were consulted and agreed to undertake the mission and provide volunteers as requested.

The mission of the 175th Rainbow Detachment was to form a composite unit—the equivalent of a squadron—deploy to the NATO Air Base at Aviano, Italy, and fly missions in support of Operation Deny Flight, while maintaining readiness to support United Nations Ground Forces should circumstances require ground support. The ANG would provide six aircraft, and the AFRES would provide six aircraft [10].

This was no routine operation. The several military forces operating in the Bosnia-Herzegovina area of operations (AOR) constituted a significant potential threat to air operations. The continuing violence on the ground could have spread to the air at any time. Air defenses included formidable, all-altitude surface-to-air missile (SAM) defense systems of Soviet design, and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) weapons were present in large numbers. Unauthorized fixed-wing and helicopter flights by aircraft armed with air-to-air missiles and guns also posed a threat. While the intent of the mission was peaceful, the threat of combat was ever present [10].

#### **D. ORGANIZATION OF THE RAINBOW DETACHMENT**

Command and control was divided carefully between the two reserve components. The Detachment Commander (DETCOM) was Lieutenant Colonel Walter T. (Ted) Thilly, ANG, Commander of the 175th Fighter Group. Major Don (Hammer) Windt, AFRES, from the 930th Operations Group, was the Operations Officer for the entire period and was the officer in charge of flight operations. Pilots were divided into two flights. One flight commander was from the 175th and the other from the AFRES squadron on the current rotation. The pilots would fly available A-10s without regard to whether they were owned by the ANG or AFRES.

The total detachment strength of 200 personnel was divided equally between the ANG and AFRES. One hundred seventy-eight of these (the minimum essential mission

requirement) were funded by USAFE. An additional 22 personnel were funded by the ANG and AFRES. Some additional support was provided by USAFE from the resources at Aviano. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the personnel funded by USAFE, and Table 3, the personnel funded by the two Air Reserve Components.

**Table 2. Personnel Required for Deny Flight**

	AFRES		ANG		Total	
	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted
Detachment Commander	—	—	1	—	1	—
Pilots	10	—	10	—	20	—
Operations Support <sup>a</sup>	—	14	—	14	—	28
Operations	—	4	—	3	—	7
Intelligence	—	2	1	2	1	4
Administration	—	1	—	1	—	2
Munitions	—	21	—	21	—	42
Maintenance	1	36	—	36	1	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>155</b>

<sup>a</sup> Flight chiefs and crew chiefs.

Source: Information provided by Major Theisen, 28 December 1994, and Colonel Thilly, 20 January 1995.

**Table 3. Additional Personnel Funded by the Air Reserve Components**

	AFRES		ANG		Total	
	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted	Officer	Enlisted
Pilots	—	—	2	—	2	—
Operations Officer	—	—	1	—	1	—
Intelligence Officer	—	—	1	—	1	—
Intelligence Specialist	—	—	—	1	—	1
Flight Surgeon	1	—	—	—	1	—
Medical Technician	—	1	—	—	—	1
Munitions	—	—	—	2	—	2
Life Support Systems	—	—	—	2	—	2
Drivers	—	9	—	2	—	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: Information provided by Major Theisen, 28 December 1994, and Colonel Thilly, 20 January 1995.

Personnel rotated in and out of the detachment on one of three plans:

- 60 Days. Four officers and one enlisted person remained the entire period to provide continuity. These included the detachment commander, operations officer, project officer, weapons officer, and senior maintenance representative.

- 30 Days. The ANG personnel rotated on two 30-day intervals and were all from the 175th Group.
- 20 Days. The AFRES personnel rotated on three 20-day intervals from three different AFRES units in the following order: The 930th Operations Group, the 917th Fighter Wing, and 442nd Fighter Wing.

The rotation schedule is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Rotation Schedule for 175th Rainbow Detachment**

Date	Activity
14 July 1994	Arrival of 175th Rainbow Detachment at Aviano, Italy
3 August 1994	Arrival of 917th Fighter Wing rotation, departure of 930th Operations Group rotation
13 August 1994	Arrival of second increment of 175th Fighter Group, departure of first increment of 175th Fighter Group
23 August 1994	Arrival of 442nd Fighter Wing rotation, departure of 917th Fighter Wing rotation
13 September 1994	Departure of 442nd Fighter Wing rotation, departure of rest of 175th Rainbow Detachment

Maintenance was an area of major emphasis. For this detachment, the Maintenance Officer was from the Air Force Reserve, and the two maintenance supervisors were divided between the two components. The previous Deny Flight operation had revealed some differences in maintenance procedures between the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard concerning the role of the crew chief. The Air Force Reserve used its crew chiefs as generalists who were responsible for an entire aircraft but could also do hydraulic or engine work. Air National Guard crew chiefs, on the other hand, were regarded as specialists and would use other specialists for hydraulic or engine work.<sup>5</sup> This was a difference in style instead of substance, and there was little difficulty in reconciling the two systems in the same detachment. It was arranged so that the AFRES maintenance supervisor would have an ANG maintenance expediter, and the ANG supervisor would have an AFRES expediter. This arrangement put a senior NCO on each shift with knowledge of each of the two approaches.

<sup>5</sup> The two approaches are set forth respectively in ACCI 21-166 (formerly AFR 66-5) for the Active Air Force and Air Force Reserve and in ANGR 66-14 for the Air National Guard.

## E. IMPLEMENTATION

Serious planning for Deny Flight started immediately after the 175th completed its Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) on 6 May 1994. Initial coordination with the Air Force Reserve had taken place even earlier, when Lieutenant Colonel Thilly visited the 930th Operations Group, AFRES, at Grissom Air Force Base, Indiana, in April 1994, just before the 175th deployed to Savannah, Georgia, for the ORI. Captain Michael Theisen was designated the Project Officer to prepare the Operational Plan, which went through several versions.

The ORI was over on 6 May, and the 175th received an outstanding rating. On 7 May, Colonel Thilly went home, repacked, and left the following day for Aviano to conduct a site survey. The Site Survey Team had six members from the ANG and six from the AFRES. Members included Major Windt, Captain Theisen, and Chief Master Sergeant Harry Capaldi, the senior maintenance representative for the 175th. The Site Survey Team worked with Major John Woerly, the ANG Representative at Headquarters, USAFE, and with 31st Wing personnel to establish the bed-down plan for the 175th Rainbow Detachment [11]. The outcome of the site survey visit was a detailed memorandum of agreement with the 31st Fighter Wing on housekeeping and support for the 175th Rainbow Detachment signed by Colonel John Campbell, Commander of the 31st Fighter Wing; Lieutenant Colonel Thilly; Major Woerly; Major Donald Windt, 930th Operations Group; Major Bruce Thomas, 442nd Fighter Wing; and Captain Donald Dunbar, Air National Guard Operations Center [12].

The deployment started on 9 July 1994. An advanced party (Advon) of 23 personnel (13 ANG and 10 AFRES) on an AFRES KC-135. Lieutenant Colonel Thilly, Captain Theisen, and key maintenance and support personnel went ahead to prepare for the arrival of the aircraft and the main body of the detachment. The Advon arrived at 0800 on 10 July 1994 and went to work to prepare for the arrival of the main body two days later.

On 12 July 1994, the pieces of the Rainbow Detachment came together at Martin State Airport. Six AFRES A-10s arrived in deployment configuration, and transport aircraft assembled. On 13 July, the main body departed in a commercial aircraft from Grissom Air Force Base, stopped at Baltimore-Washington International Airport to pick up the 175th personnel, and arrived in Aviano the next day. On 14 July the twelve A-10s departed Martin State Airport in two flights for Lages Air Base, Azores, accompanied by two KC-10 refueling aircraft. The aircraft departed Lages early on 15 July and arrived at Aviano later that day. A C-141 with equipment and supplies had left Martin State Airport on 14 July, stopped briefly at Lages, and also arrived at Aviano on 15 July. By the evening of 15 July,

all of the personnel, equipment, and aircraft of the 175th Rainbow Detachment had arrived without incident. The unit spent the 15th and the morning of the 16th, getting organized, regenerating the aircraft, and briefing the pilots for the first operational mission, which took place the afternoon of 16 July 1994. There was only a two-day gap between the departure of the 510th Fighter Squadron and the commencement of operations by the 175th Rainbow Detachment.

Aviano is a large operating base with many fighter squadrons moving in as U.S. bases in Germany close down. The base is operated by the 31st Fighter Wing, commanded at the time by Colonel John Campbell. There were two active Air Force F-16 squadrons at Aviano and numerous other support and tenant activities.

Some special aspects to living conditions at Aviano required careful management and strong leadership. These are explained below.

*Housing.* A general shortage of housing at the base required the enlisted personnel in grade E-6 and below to live in tents on the base, while the officers and senior NCOs were quartered in hotels in the town of Aviano. The acceptability of the tent city was increased by the action of the 31st Fighter Wing commander to allow reduced per diem for the troops living there instead of taking it all away. This made living in the tents more attractive than it would otherwise have been. Captain Theisen made a videotape of the tent city on the site survey and showed it to the troops at home station, along with the per diem information. This helped attract more volunteers for the mission [11].

*Local Transportation.* Recognizing that there would be a general shortage of local transportation—particularly for those living in the tent city—the 175th authorized and encouraged personnel to bring bicycles with them on the deployment. Special arrangements were made to pack the bikes on pallets for airlift. This worked out well [11].

*Food.* The troops were able to eat from a variety of sources, including a snack bar at the golf course, the Burger King at the base exchange, and local restaurants downtown. The maintenance section prepared a lunch of hot dogs and soft drinks daily at the flight line for the convenience of personnel working on the aircraft. Some light cooking was done in the tents. The troops were not allowed to use the nearby Marine Corps field mess because doing so would have required them to forfeit their per diem. Overall, food was not a problem [11].<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The troops thought that the Marines were being exclusive, but the decision not to use the mess hall was made by the 175th leadership.

*Plumbing.* The base plumbing was in bad shape; the toilets quit working periodically and water was frequently unavailable. Lieutenant Colonel Thilly obtained portable toilets to ease the problem, but the plumbing was never fixed.

*Spare Time.* One of the incentives for the personnel to volunteer for the mission was an opportunity to see Italy. However, few of the troops were able to get away because flight operations occurred on seven days per week for the first several weeks. The schedule called for flying five days per week, but contingencies seemed to occur every weekend. The problem was exacerbated because the active Air Force personnel on the base were working only five-day weeks and had every weekend off. Finally, after several weeks, there was some time for recreation, but even then some of the personnel on the 20-day rotations worked every day.

*Discipline.* The guardsmen and reservists behaved very well. Some of the 16 rental vehicles used by the detachment were involved in accidents, but these were considered to be routine for Italy. Drinking while driving was not tolerated. Only one serious breach of discipline occurred, and Lieutenant Colonel Thilly persuaded Colonel Campbell to allow the matter to be treated in the 175th rather than become a formal charge [11].<sup>7</sup>

There was some tension between the administrative chain of command up to the 31st Fighter Wing and the operational chain of command up to the CAOC. In negotiating solutions to these differences, Lieutenant Colonel Thilly gave priority to the primary mission of the detachment—flight operations over Bosnia.

## **F. OPERATIONS**

The general mission of the 175th Rainbow Detachment was to fly missions under NATO command in support of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. The planned schedule was to fly for six days and then take two days off, but because of the high demand for A-10 aircraft the days off seldom happened. Each flying day had a morning mission of eight aircraft and an afternoon mission of six aircraft. Missions were performed in pairs, with both pilots qualified in close air support (CAS) and one of the pair qualified also as an Airborne Forward Air Controller (AFAC). The A-10s flew two kinds of missions:

- *Air Strike Control.* In this mission the AFAC qualified pilot directed the flight operations of other NATO aircraft in the AOR and worked with different

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<sup>7</sup> Court martial authority probably resided with the 31st Fighter Wing commander, but this did not have to be tested during this exercise.

ground forward air controllers. NATO had many different kinds of aircraft from many different nations in the AOR, including F-16s from Denmark, Turkey, and the USA; Jaguars from the United Kingdom and France; Tornados and Sea Harriers from the United Kingdom; and F-18s from the U.S. Marine Corps [11].

- *Close Air Support.* In this mission, the A-10s simulated bombing and strafing attacks on ground targets. This involved working with the ground Forward Air Controllers (FACs) of many NATO nations. The ground forward air controllers from the armed forces of Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, France, and the United Kingdom. The language of air control was English, and although there were some problems, the forward air control system had improved noticeably from the experience of the previous December.

An Air Tasking Order (ATO) was published each evening by the CAOC and arrived at the 175th Operations from 1600 to 1800 daily. This ATO provided the firm schedule for the next days flying. The 175th prepared a three-day estimated schedule so that pilots, crew chiefs, and maintenance personnel would know what to expect, and the ATO usually conformed to the three-day schedule. The 175th stationed a pilot at CAOC on four- or-five day rotations to act as liaison and advise on the employment of the A-10 aircraft.

The A-10s were configured identically for either mission, and indeed, it was often necessary to switch back and forth from one mission to the other while on the same flight. Each A-10 carried the following armament:

- two AIM-9 air-to-air missiles (for defense against aircraft or for attacking enemy helicopters),
- two rocket pods each with seven 2.75" rockets (14 rockets),
- two AGM-65D/G Maverick precision guided munitions (to attack armor or bunkers),
- one electronic countermeasures pod,
- one GAU-8 30mm automatic cannon with 1,150 rounds of mixed high-explosive incendiary and armor-piercing incendiary ammunition and a depleted uranium core.

The A-10s were refueled routinely to and from the AOR by ANG and AFRES tankers operating out of Pisa International Airport and a French Air Base in Southern France. The tanker crews flying these KC-130 aircraft were volunteers rotating from their home stations on a weekly basis [11].

The 175th Rainbow Detachment pilots usually flew one mission per day. All of the pilots flew missions. Captain Theisen, the Project Officer, flew 24 missions in his 60-day tour.

The missions were controlled by tactical air controllers on the Airborne Command and Control Center (ABCCC), a NATO-configured E-3 aircraft. Missions were initiated, directed, and terminated solely by the ABCCC. The pilots were briefed before each mission, made an in-flight report at the end of each mission while still aloft, and were debriefed extensively after returning to Aviano Air Base. The missions were real, and the threat was real, for while there were few instances of engagement by sophisticated air defenses, there was a lot of ground fire by small arms and automatic weapons directed at the NATO aircraft.

As related in the introduction to this document, the highlight of the flight operations of the 175th Rainbow Detachment occurred on 5 August 1994, when Major Theisen and Lieutenant Jones made a real attack on a Bosnian Serb tank. This operation was hardly routine; the restriction placed on the pilots by both the UN and NATO made the task more difficult than would have been the case in a real war. However, the challenge to the professionalism of the pilots and the support personnel was very real indeed. A detailed chronology of this mission is presented in Appendix B.

The 175th Fighter Group is not finished with Deny Flight. The unit sent two pilots and three maintenance personnel on each of three 20-day rotations to support the Deny Flight operation from December 1993 to January 1994. The 175th offered an A-10 to the 110th Fighter Group of the Michigan Air National Guard to support this mission, but it was not needed [11]. The 175th also participated in Deny Flight operations over Bosnia from November 1994 through January 1995.

## **G. OBSERVATIONS**

The following paragraphs summarize our observations about this operation.

*Routine.* The most striking feature of this operation is that it was so routine. There were some problems with communication and the usual amount of griping about living conditions and higher headquarters, but none of these problems could be considered major. The entire project was handled from conception to redeployment as a military operation handled in a military manner by military people who understood what was wanted and knew what they were doing. The fact that the personnel involved were guardsmen or reservists serving voluntarily on active duty seemed not to be important compared to the

routine process of assembling airmen, aircraft, equipment, and supplies and organizing them to fly missions.

*Experience.* One of the reasons the Deny Flight operation was routine, was that all of the participants had done things like it before and some had done the same thing before. The fighter groups had moved some or all of their aircraft to different bases, set up, and flown missions before. The Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve had worked together cooperatively before. The transport aircraft, the refueling aircraft, and the fighter aircraft had worked together before. The scheduling of bits and pieces of capability to meet and coalesce into a unit had been done before. While the challenges of this mission were real, the fact that the leaders, planners, and participants had done the tasks before made it possible to do them quickly without a big deal.

*Full-timers.* A lot of full-time personnel were involved in this operation. The commander, operations officer, 37 percent of the 22 pilots, and 33 percent of the total detachment personnel were full-time guardsmen and reservists. As such, they provided the day-to-day effort required to plan and mount such operations. The planning and preparation could never have been done in a timely manner by part-time workers only on inactive duty training or even on extra man-days. Full-time personnel were also available to occupy the longer periods on missions for which the part-timers are reluctant to volunteer. For this mission, all but two of the personnel who stayed in Italy the entire 60 days were full-timers.<sup>8</sup>

*Part-timers.* The Traditional Guardsmen and Drilling Reservists provided the bulk of the effort, and without them the mission could not have succeeded. These part-timers were in effect practicing their traditional role of augmenting the active forces in time of need. In this role, their task is made easier and perhaps even feasible by the strong and sympathetic support of their fellow guardsmen and reservists working for them on a full-time basis. Traditional Guardsmen are the source of most of the full-timers. Both Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones were part-timers when they flew their combat mission over Bosnia; today, both are full-time guardsmen.

*Delegation.* Responsibility was delegated to the 175th Fighter Group to plan, coordinate, organize, and carry out this mission. Colonel Thilly and his staff did not have a horde of active Air Force people hovering over them, trying to be helpful, giving orders, and generally getting in the way. A mission type order was passed down the chain of

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<sup>8</sup> One of the exceptions was Captain Theisen, who had been laid off from his airline pilot job and welcomed the extensive period of active duty.

command to the 175th Fighter Group, and the Air Force had enough confidence in the Air National Guard to let the unit perform the mission and enough sense to provide the necessary resources.

*Acceptance.* Most important was the casual acceptance by the Air Force active-duty personnel of the presence of the guardsmen and reservists at a NATO base flying NATO missions in support of the United Nations. Yes, there were problems. Active Air force personnel did haggle about providing support, and there were constraints on the troops, but the problems that did exist were not caused by tensions between the Active Component and the Guard and Reserve Components. Rather, they were the usual tensions between supported and supporting elements and between discipline and morale that occur in all military operations. All of these Air Force personnel appeared to understand that they were part of the same organization.

*Attitude.* The Air Force appears to have the attitude that the Air Reserve Components are a valued and valuable part of the Total Air Force. They provide first-class equipment to their guardsmen and reservists and expect them to train to Air Force standards.

**APPENDIX A**

**175<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP ACTIVITY SCHEDULE, 1990-1994**

## APPENDIX A

### 175<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP ACTIVITY SCHEDULE, 1990-1994

#### 1990

10-11 Feb: Operational Readiness Exercise  
19-27 Apr: Operational Readiness Inspection (Excellent Rating)  
1-30 Jun: Fort Drum, NY (6 aircraft)  
16-22 Jun: Truax Field, WI (5 aircraft)  
1-30 Jul: Clinic Operations  
11-24 Jul: Sembach Air Base, Germany (8 aircraft)  
21 Jul-4 Aug: Tactical Clinic, Myrtle Beach, SC  
1-31 Aug: Fort Drum, NY (9 aircraft)  
1-30 Sep: Fort Drum, NY (6 aircraft)  
17-30 Oct: Little Rock, AR (3 aircraft, 37 personnel)

#### 1991

16-26 Jan: Clinic, Myrtle Beach, SC (Desert Storm support)  
20-24 Feb: Gulfport, MS (4 aircraft)  
2-16 Mar: Brainstorm, Myrtle Beach, SC (200 personnel)  
1-7 Jun: MSS, McDill AFB, FL (32 personnel)  
1-15 Jun: Clinic, Elmendorf AFB, AL (44 personnel)  
16-26 Jun: Comm Flight, Patuxent Naval Air Station (14 personnel)  
9-23 Jun: Sentry Cascade, McChord AFB, WA  
6-20 Jul: Civil Engineering Squadron, Camp Murray, WA  
10-16 Sep: Fort Drum, NY  
6-10 Oct: Gunsmoke Competition, Nellis AFB, NV

#### 1992

4-18 Jan: Red Flag, Nellis AFB, NV  
7-20 Feb: SPF Deployment, Silver Flag Alpha  
23-28 Apr: Unit Effectiveness Inspection  
19-22 Aug: Fort Drum, NY (8 aircraft)  
1-31 Aug: Civil Engineer Squadron, Bitburg, Germany  
15-29 Aug: Medical Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ  
29 Aug-12 Sep: Coronet Scabbard, Germany  
October: Increase to 24 aircraft and FAC capability

## 1993

January: Upgrade to night operations unit  
January: Test unit for objective organization  
2-5 Apr: C-130 escort, Pope AFB, NC (6 aircraft, 16 personnel)  
14-21 Apr: Canadian exercise, Shearwater (6 aircraft, 40 personnel)  
23-29 May: Volk Field, WI (6 aircraft, 31 personnel)  
20 Jun-3 Jul: Tactical Clinic, Alpena, MS (72 personnel)  
24-27 Jul: Range Testing, Gulfport, MS (5 aircraft, 25 personnel)  
31 Jul-14 Aug: Civil Engineering Squadron, Volk Field, WI (55 personnel)  
18-24 Sep: ORE, Savannah, GA (16 aircraft, 605 personnel)  
15 Nov-15 Jan: Deny Flight, Aviano, Italy (2 aircraft, 42 personnel)  
8-13 Dec: Ready Olympiad 94-1 (5 aircraft, 36 personnel)

## 1994

1-31 Jan: Training with 104th FS, 113th FW, and MAG 49 (USMC)  
8-22 Jan: Medical Squadron, Honduras (30 personnel)  
1-30 Mar: ORE at Home Station  
30 Apr-6 May: ORI, Savannah, GA  
13 Jul-13 Sep: Deny Flight, Aviano, Italy (6 aircraft, 183 personnel)  
28 Aug-3 Sep: Civil Engineering Sqdn, Tyndall AFB, FL (43 personnel)  
15 Dec-15 Jan: Deny Flight, Aviano, Italy (15 personnel)

**APPENDIX B**

**COMBAT MISSION CHRONOLOGY,  
FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 1994**

## APPENDIX B

### COMBAT MISSION CHRONOLOGY, FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 1994<sup>1</sup>

- 0530: Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones attend the morning show (operations briefing).
- 0730: The fD-1ano Air Base on a standard training mission to work with a Bangladeshi ground forward air controller in the vicinity of Mostar.
- 0830: Flight meets Air Force Reserve KC-130 refueling aircraft and takes on fuel.
- 0900: Flight arrives "in-country" over Bosnia and works for about 45 minutes as an airborne forward air controller (AFAC) directing British Jaguar fighters on simulated attacks on targets. After British have left, the flight works some targets themselves.
- 1000: Flight exits the area of responsibility and returns to base.
- 1030: Flight lands at Aviano. Theisen and Jones have flown 3.7 hours on the morning mission.
- 1045: While in the de-arming area, flight is notified by the Consolidated Air Operations Center (CAOC) that it is "hot cocked," or being stood up for another mission.
- 1115: Theisen and Jones report to Squadron Operations for debriefing of morning mission. Intelligence people brief the two pilots on the new situation. The Bosnian Serbs have not lived up to their promises and on the previous evening took back some of the heavy weapons they had consigned to UN custody. The situation is very confrontational. NATO wants to mount a big air attack to convince Bosnian Serbs to cooperate, but the UN wants only a few targets hit. Finally, agreement is reached to strike five targets. Each of the targets is assigned to designated aircraft. The target assigned to the two A-10s from the 175th Fighter Group is a Serbian tank located about 7 miles southeast of Sarajevo. The pilots are given the coordinates and a poor photograph of the target.

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<sup>1</sup> As described by Major Michael Theisen.

At this same time, a new set of AFRES pilots from the 917th Fighter Wing reports into Squadron Operations on the first day of their 20-day rotation, and Captain Theisen briefs them on both the operations procedures and the current situation. In the meantime the situation on the targets changes back and forth. It was "quite a show."

- 1330: Theisen and Jones get something to eat.
- 1430: Theisen and Jones are scrambled and make preparations for the second mission.
- 1445: The flight of two A-10s takes off and is airborne en route to the primary target vicinity of Sarajevo.
- 1515: Just as the two aircraft are closing with the refueling aircraft, CAOC directs them to proceed immediately to the target area. This leaves the A-10s with only about 30 minutes of loiter time over the target area.
- 1530: The flight arrives over the target area and establishes radio contact with the FAC, a French soldier whose call sign is Disney Zero Two. The FAC has a laser designator to assist in identifying ground targets. There is a large thunderstorm over the target area, and the ceiling is about 9,000 feet. Theisen and Jones maintain visual flight rules at about 5,000 feet. Theisen finds the target, and the FAC lases the target.

During this procedure, the Airborne Command and Control Center (ABCCC) was repeatedly reminding Captain Theisen of the four conditions that had to be met before a live attack could take place:

In its urgency to make sure that Captain Theisen understands these rules, the ABCCC even jams communications with the ground FAC during this period.

When the conditions are met, Captain Theisen contacts the ABCCC and requests authority to attack the target. When ABCCC replies with positive clearance, Captain Theisen realizes that this is going to be a real attack.

Captain Theisen calls back to the ground FAC, who replies, "You are cleared dry." This means that the ground FAC does not realize it is to be a real attack and has cleared Theisen only for a simulated attack.

Captain Theisen replies: "Negative. We are cleared hot by higher authority."

The ground FAC again says that the flight was cleared dry, but also says that he will check with his superiors. Lieutenant General Michael Rose, the NATO Commander in Bosnia, has agreed to the hot attacks but the word has not arrived at the tactical air control party near this particular target.

Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones orbit the area for about ten minutes while the FAC is checking, but the two A-10s are getting low on fuel. Captain Theisen tells the ground FAC that he has to have clearance to attack within one

minute or the aircraft will have to return to base for fuel. There is no response.

1700: Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones leave the AOR and plan to return to base.

1730: While en route to Aviano the two aircraft are directed to meet a tanker aircraft and refuel.

After refueling, the ABCCC assigns a different target to Theisen and Jones and gives their original target to another pair of A-10s from the 175th Fighter Group. There is some discussion about this, and as Theisen and Jones re-enter the AOR, they are assigned to attack their original target. In a cautionary move to minimize the chances of being shot down, ABCCC tells the pilots not to go below the cloud layer, which was at about 6,000 feet.

Theisen and Jones decide to press ahead. They get near the target and are under the cloud layer, but they find that two French fighters talking to Disney Zero Two in French are over the target area and trying to locate the target.

Captain Theisen goes into an AFAC mode and tries to help the French fighters find the target. The previous two live attacks had been made by U.S. aircraft, and CAOC wants to spread the honors around by having a non-U.S. NATO aircraft make this attack.

After some time of maneuvering, the French talk ceases, and Disney Zero Two informs Captain Theisen that the French aircraft have departed. The 175th pilots now have the target all to themselves.

This time, Disney Zero Two informs the fighters that they are cleared hot.

The two A-10s make a couple of laser passes over the target to identify it clearly, then Captain Theisen informs ABCCC that all requirements were met and asks for clearance. ABCCC wants Captain Theisen to hold back and act as AFAC for his wingman, Lieutenant Jones, but Captain Theisen is not to be denied a hot run after all of the earlier nonsense.

The two pilots agree that each aircraft would attack using the GAU-8 30mm cannon.

The flight goes into a wedge formation with Captain Theisen leading and Lieutenant Jones following. Disney Zero Two lases the target, but Theisen has the target cold on his own. Theisen rolls in and fires about 130 rounds on the first pass. Jones follows him in a strafing run and fires about 30 rounds. The two A-10s go back up and get permission from Disney Zero Two for a re-attack. Theisen and Jones both go back in for a second run, this time holding the target longer and putting more rounds on the target than in the first run.

Things get confused about this time.

The target is a modified M-18 tank made in the United States right after World War II. The tank mounts a 76mm gun in an open cupola on top of the tank body. The tank has a tread off, and the gun is probably inoperative. The 30mm armor-piercing rounds (interspersed with high explosive rounds) do more damage to the tank. There are no personnel in the area, for the UN had warned the Bosnian Serbs of the attack an hour before.

1830: The two A-10s leave the AOR en route to Aviano and their in-flight report to the ABCCC. The ABCCC directs them not to return to base but to rendezvous with another tanker to refuel and return to the AOR for another target.

1845: The two aircraft are directed to the vicinity of Sarajevo and told to remain at 25,000 feet in case the Bosnian Serbs retaliate for the attack on the tank. They loiter in the area for another hour and a half until it is completely dark. Captain Theisen can see the bright flashes of firing on the ground but cannot tell if it is ground fire or antiaircraft fire. Finally, the two aircraft are released and told to return to base.

2030: The two A-10s land at Aviano after 6.5 hours of flight. They are met by the 31st Fighter Wing Commander and a host of others. The videotape is taken and flown immediately to the Senior NATO Commander in Naples, and the debriefing is thorough and exhausting. The two fighter pilots from the 175th are the only two of the many NATO pilots over the AOR that day who manage actually to fire on their target.

This operation was more a political statement than a serious military attack. The target was militarily useless, and the Bosnian Serbs appeared to be more upset about the death of a cow than the destruction of a tank. However, the Bosnian Serbs gave back the confiscated heavy weapons within an hour after the attack.

The fact that the target was a disabled tank does not, however, diminish the professionalism it took to make the attack. The conditions of caution urged by the UN and NATO made it more difficult than it should have been, and this was a real test of the fighter pilots involved. After all of the complexities introduced by the political subtleties, real combat should be a snap.

Captain Theisen and Lieutenant Jones had been in the air for 10.2 hours. As Captain Theisen says, "It was a long day."

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## REFERENCES

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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AAA	anti-aircraft artillery
ABCCC	Airborne Command and Control Center
ACC	Air Combat Command
AFAC	airborne forward air controller
AFRES	Air Force Reserve
ANG	Air National Guard
AOR	area of operations
ATO	Air Tasking Order
CAOC	Consolidated Air Operations Center
CAS	close air support
CONUS	continental United States
DETCOM	Detachment Commander
FAC	forward air controller
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	noncommissioned officer
ORE	Operational Readiness Evaluation
ORI	Operational Readiness Inspection
SAM	surface-to-air
UN	United Nations
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFE	United States Air Force, Europe

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