

# Ducimus Heritage

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Colonel Robin Olds delivering the first F-101 to the 189th.

## The Creation of our Fourth Patch

This month's historical patch is for the McDonnell RF-101 Voodoo "One-O-Wonder." The patch covers a time when the 189th flew the RF-101G, H and C model Voodoo. During this time period, the 189th deployed in support of a captured spy ship and converted to the formal school house for the RF-101C.

A few years after moving their RB-57A's from Adam's Field to Little Rock AFB, the 189th Tactical Recon group was notified it would be changing aircraft. The 189th was selected to convert to a tactical reconnaissance fighter jet, the F-101A, but the jets that were delivered were not even camera equipped recon fighters; these aircraft were originally designed as a tactical nuclear bomber. The first F-101A was delivered to the 189th by the famous Vietnam fighter pilot and commander, Colonel Robin Olds, on 30 June 1965. The 189th would be responsible for converting their F-101As into a camera nosed tactical reconnaissance platforms; each aircraft had to be completely modified in the hangers with the new chisel nosed camera equipment. Over the course of nearly three years, 24 aircraft were fully converted

and crews were qualified. Then on 23 January 1968 a small US Navy ship captured by the North Koreans pulled the 189<sup>th</sup>, and their newly converted RF-101G's, into an international engagement that would be known as the "Pueblo Incident."

On that January day in 1968, the North Koreans attacked and captured a small "Research Navy ship," the USS Pueblo. The North Koreans stated that the ship had deliberately come into their territorial waters and was spying on their country; however, the US Navy maintained it was at least 13 miles offshore in international waters. The North Koreans surrounded the ship and fired on it killing one sailor, and then captured the ship and its 82 crew members, who were held and tortured for 11 months while deliberations were held.

So how did the 189th play in this incident? The US needed recon on what was going on in North Korea and with the Pueblo and its crew, and the US needed support of the nation back home for this incident. On January 26<sup>th</sup> of 1968, the 189th was notified that it would be deployed in support of the "Pueblo Incident." In April of 1968 many of the pilots were deployed to Bergstrom AFB, Texas, to train on the new recon missions they would be flying while they were deployed. Finally, in July of 1968, the entire unit deployed to Itazuke AFB, Japan. The 189th deployed 24 aircraft and around 30 pilots.



USS Pueblo.

"You don't stumble upon your heritage. It's there, just waiting to be explored and shared."

Robbie Robertson (Canadian musician)

The exact details of what the Voodoo pilots photographed during the deployment are still not fully known even today, but the unit and its aircraft were kept busy. They would generate up to 16 missions a day, including one or two alert aircraft ready to recon anything the Air Force would send down as a high priority. This lasted until November of 1968 when the Reno Air Guard replaced the 189th at Itazuke AFB. The 189th left its planes there for the Reno to utilize. When the 189th returned to Little Rock, it had 18 RF-101G and H model from the 123rd ANG unit (Kentucky) which had left its planes behind in the states as it stood up on active duty to replace the Reno unit at Itazuke. The crew of the USS Pueblo was finally released on 23 December 1968. The ship itself was never released from North Korea and is considered a prize by their government. It is held to this day in a North Korean river and is used as propaganda and a museum piece. The ship is still registered as an active US Navy ship and is the second oldest ship still on the registry - and one of the few US ships to ever be captured.



RF-101G.

The 189th flew the RF-101G and H model till 1970 when it received the longer nosed RF-101C. This model was handed down from active duty returning from Vietnam. The C model had more cameras in its nose and, unlike the G and H model, had been built from the McDonnell Douglas Company as a Reconnaissance jet. After the unit became qualified in the C model, the 189th was chosen to become the school house for the RF-101 Voodoo. The 189th flew the long nosed single seat camera equipped RF-101C, and three dual control two-seater RF-101F models (to help train new pilots before they flew by

themselves in the single seat version). The 189th flew the Voodoo until 1976 when it converted to the KC-135A aerial refueling tanker. From photographing the captured USS Pueblo and its crew to teaching others to fly the jet for the Tactical Recon schoolhouse, the RF-101 Voodoo was truly a “One-O-Wonder” for the 189<sup>th</sup> and the Arkansas Air National Guard.

*Special thanks to Chief Master Sargent Richard Green (Ret) for all the help and information for this article.*

*Written by MSgt. Bobby Dugger*



Our third official Heritage patch.

### **The Story of Aircraft 62-1787**

This aircraft was assigned to the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing for over 20 years and is currently on display at the United States Air Force Museum located at Wright Patterson AFB in Ohio. To this day it proudly displays the same “nose art” that it wore during its final years in the 189<sup>th</sup>.

On the morning of April 15, 1972 three aircraft and their aircrews departed from an airfield in Vietnam. Their mission was to resupply Army troops who were in close contact with the enemy at An Loc, Vietnam. The troops were in grave danger of being overrun by a much larger enemy force. The aircrews would airdrop ammunition and mortar rounds using Container Delivery System procedures to the ground troops; utilizing a soccer field as the drop zone. The first aircraft was commanded by Major Robert Wallace of the 776th Tactical Airlift Squadron. His aircraft took hits but successfully dropped.

“History doesn’t repeat itself, but it does rhyme.”

Mark Twain

The second aircraft was commanded by Captain Bill Caldwell. The aircraft tail number was 62-1787 operating with the call sign "Spare 617." Capt Caldwell elected to approach the drop zone from a different direction due to the ground fire that the first aircraft experienced. When the crew was 30 seconds from the drop zone, they also encountered a large barrage of antiaircraft fire. The ground fire instantly killed the flight engineer, Technical Sargent Jon Sanders. The copilot, Lt John Hering, and the navigator, Lt. Richard Lentz, were severely injured and incapacitated. Communication between the flight deck and cargo compartment was lost and a major fire broke out in the cargo compartment, which ignited both the aircraft and its load of ammunition and mortars.



Tail 62-1787 on the ramp in Vietnam.

The loadmasters, Staff Sargent Charlie Shaub and Airman First Class Dave McAleece, fought the fire. The heat was so intense from the fire and from ruptured bleed air lines that Shaub severely burned his hands on the hot metal of his fire extinguisher. Shaub managed to jettison the cargo -- two of the CDS bundles exploded immediately after exiting the aircraft. Had the load exploded a few seconds earlier, the aircraft and crew would have certainly been lost. The anti-aircraft artillery also knocked out both engines on the left hand side of the aircraft. The loss of these two engines disabled the aircraft's main hydraulic systems and prevented the landing gear from being lowered normally. Shaub was forced to manually extend the landing gear with a hand-crank. He did this with third degree burns on his hands. While they were in the landing pattern, a third engine lost power, but Capt Caldwell managed to get the airplane down safely.

Staff Sargent Charlie Shaub was put in for the Medal of Honor due to his actions that day. His Medal of Honor was downgraded to the Air Force Cross. Captain Caldwell also earned the Air Force Cross for his actions. The Air Force Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor.

One of 1787's final missions was to attend the "Herk Invasion Airshow" in Ypsilanti, Michigan. We flew the airplane at 5,000 feet up the Mississippi River all the way from Arkansas to Michigan. The famous C-130E sat center stage at the airshow surrounded by 15 other C-130s from around the country. Countless Vietnam vets sat and told us war stories in the back of 1787, some even remembered this particular airplane.

*Written by TSgt. Brian Swanson*



Tail 62-1787 on the ramp at LRAFB.

### **10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and the Relief Efforts of the 189 AW**

Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast ten years ago on Aug. 29, 2005, devastating New Orleans and hundreds of other coastal towns and communities from Louisiana to Alabama.

Three days later, Sept. 1, 2005, Arkansas Air National Guard airmen flew aircraft and sent airmen from the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing and other state units to provide aid to devastated Americans on the coast. Initially, the state's Army and Air National Guard resources were largely sent to the New Orleans metropolitan area. In the weeks and months that followed August 2005, the state's Guardsmen would

"History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme."

Mark Twain

eventually provide security, medical services, and other relief to many hurricane-ravaged cities and towns throughout coastal Louisiana and Mississippi. It was one of the largest mobilizations in the history of our state's Air National Guard, and many veteran airmen currently in the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing participated in the mission in the air, and on the ground.



A call for airmen volunteers went out Aug. 31, 2005, to all units of the Arkansas Air National Guard, and Governor Mike Huckabee ordered these volunteers to state active duty to assist with the relief mission. About 130 airmen assembled at Little Rock Air Force Base and left in the late afternoon Sept. 1, 2005, heading toward New Orleans in a 29-vehicle relief convoy of Humvees, trucks, buses and vans. The convoy included citizen volunteers from the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 123<sup>rd</sup> Intelligence Squadron, the 188<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing of Fort Smith, and the 223<sup>rd</sup> Combat Communications Squadron of Hot Springs.

Due to the destruction of the road infrastructure near New Orleans, the convoy detoured to Jackson, Mississippi, where personnel slept for a few hours in a hangar at an Air National Guard base at the Jackson airport. Just outside the hangar, dozens of military rescue helicopters flew all night on search and rescue missions to the coast. Facing uncertainty on how safe New Orleans would be when arriving, airmen in the convoy were issued M-16 rifles and one clip of ammunition (by 189th Security Forces), with strict instructions to keep the weapons unloaded unless ordered to load them in a threatened situation (such a situation never arose). The Arkansas convoy arrived the next evening just before dark, Sept. 2, 2005, at

New Orleans Naval Air Station, located on the western side of the Mississippi River from New Orleans. This base became the staging area for a massive relief buildup of National Guard and active duty military personnel. Arkansas Air National Guardsmen were among the first military units to reach the beleaguered city.



A devastating view of flooded buildings, streets, and a wind-ravaged New Orleans Superdome greeted 189 AW aircrews who flew hurricane relief supplies and personnel to help civilian victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Almost immediately the next morning, Sept. 3, 2005, the convoy's Security Forces Squadron airmen headed downtown to support the Arkansas Army National Guard's 39<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team, which arrived in New Orleans earlier to provide security patrols for city residents. Medical Group airmen were dispatched to the New Orleans Superdome, to a mall, and other downtown relief centers to provide medical assistance to civilians.



The rest of the convoy's forces prepared makeshift quarters on the second floor of an empty

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elementary school on the base. Airmen sat up cots in empty classrooms, where the walls were adorned with drawings from long-evacuated first and second grade children. A temporary command and control operations center was established in another room and the convoy commanders opened communications with Louisiana civilian and military officials coordinating rescue and relief operations. An armory was opened in another school room, and all airmen not deployed into the city on a mission turned in their rifles, pistols, and ammunition. Other convoy airmen policed around the school campus, picking up debris and trash strewn everywhere by the hurricane.

Back at Little Rock Air Force Base, the rest of the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing wasn't idle. On Sept. 3, 2005 (the day after the Air National Guard convoy began relief work in New Orleans), Governor Huckabee ordered the wing and its C-130 fleet to state active duty to airlift supplies and troops to the city, and to evacuate civilians stranded in Louisiana.

Instead of resting with families over the Labor Day 2005 weekend, and continuing through September, wing aircrews flew 60 sorties that delivered 48 tons of cargo, 414 military passengers, and evacuated 626 civilians and 59 patients. Airmen who remained at Little Rock AFB provided logistical support to the airlift missions that flew to and from Louisiana.



Another aerial view of New Orleans wards, flooded after the Mississippi River levee broke following damage from the storm surge from Hurricane Katrina in late August 2005.

The mission was fluid and changed rapidly as more and more evacuees left the ravaged Gulf Coast for refuge shelters in Arkansas and other states. One of the wing's C-130s was diverted from Fort Smith Regional Airport to Austin, Texas, after Fort Chafee (near Fort Smith) filled up with evacuees.



While the wing performed the relief mission, its normal mission of training aircrew students was suspended. On Sept. 6, 2005, the wing resumed its aircrew training mission.

Later that week, the National Guard Bureau directed that all airmen of units involved with Gulf Coast relief missions be removed from state active duty and placed in Title 32 federal status, retroactive to the date of the first state mobilization. Airmen deployed to support Hurricane Katrina operations would remain in federal status while on orders performing hurricane relief work. From September through October 2005, the 189<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing rotated airmen in and out of the Louisiana coast. While most of the wing's airmen ended their relief missions in October, a handful remained into November providing relief duties in critical roles.

The ground relief airmen in Louisiana experienced some tense drama in late September 2005. All the Arkansas Air Guardsmen took shelter and hunkered down in a gymnasium during Hurricane Rita, a second hurricane that ravaged Texas (particularly Houston), but also brought floods and damaging winds back to New Orleans and the Louisiana coastline.

*Written by MSgt. Phillip Parish*

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