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Bosnia Trip Aviano Remarks 12/22/97

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Row: 48  Section: 6  Shelf: 2  Position: 1  Stack: V
001. note       [Captain Tracy O'Grady Contact Numbers] (partial) (1 page)  ca. 12/1997  P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:
Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
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RESTRICTION CODES

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12/19/97 5PM

PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO TROOPS AND FAMILIES
AVIANO AFB
AVIANO, ITALY
DECEMBER 22, 1997

Acknowledgments: Prime Minister Prodi, General Peppe [peppy], Ambassador Foglietta, General Clark [Note: advance team will provide a card]

To the men and women of the 31st Fighter Wing -- the Triple Nickel... the "Buzzards" of the 510th Fighter Squadron... and the 603rd Air Control Squadron; to the "Panthers" of Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron Two; to all the families and civilian personnel; to our Italian hosts and our British and Spanish allies: It's great to be back in Aviano.

Two years ago, as some of you here may recall, I showed up at six in the morning. Despite the hour, the dark and the cold, you made me feel very welcome. And today, I am honored to join you again at a slightly more civilized hour – to share the spirit of the holiday season... and to say, on behalf of your proud and grateful nation: Thank you for your service.

Our men and women in uniform, at Aviano and around the world, reflect the best of America. You come from different hometowns, with different backgrounds and different dreams – but you share a belief in America's role as the world's leading force for peace and freedom. And every day, you put yourselves on the line to bring that role to life – defending our nation... deterring aggressors... bringing hope to those in need.

I especially wanted to thank you today for your heroic efforts in Bosnia. You have been with us every step of the way -- from Deny Flight to Deliberate Force; Decisive Edge to Deliberate...
Guard – keeping the battle out of the skies... driving the parties to the peace table... providing essential air cover for your colleagues on the ground. The names of the operations changed, but your dedication never wavered. And because of you, we've ended the war and we're building the peace.

As you know, I’ve just spent the day in Bosnia, where I saw the fruits of your labor. I saw children who could play outdoors without fear. I saw schools and hospitals and roads that had been repaired. I saw homes that were warm, stores that were open, families that were nourished and hopes that were alive. I saw a land that, because of you, will enjoy the blessings of peace in the new year. I want you to be proud of what you helped achieve. America is very proud of you.

I’m told that one of my favorite groups was performing here last week – The Miracles. Let me say this: When it comes to bringing peace to Bosnia, you have worked miracles.

Your mission of peace and goodwill in Bosnia reminds us what this season is all about. And at this time of year, we are especially aware of the sacrifices you make – leaving families, loved ones and the comforts of home behind; doing your duty so your fellow Americas can wake up on Christmas morning to a flourishing nation at peace.

I want to say a special word to the families here, some of whose loved ones may be deployed far from base even as we meet. The work you do to support your loved ones is a round-the-clock, full-time job. When we call on our troops to defend America’s interests, we call on their
families as well. And no ribbon or medal could ever convey the enormity of your service... the strength of your support... the depth of your commitment... or the size of your hearts.

I’d also like to thank Prime Minister Prodi [TK] and the Italian people for their hospitality... and for all they have done to help a new day of peace shine forth in Bosnia. To our Italian hosts, and to the British and Spanish servicemen who join us here today: The United States is proud to be your Allies, partners and friends.

And to all the men and women of the Aviano community: When I came to visit two years ago, you gave me a wonderful flight jacket. On the wing patch are three simple words that have guided the 31st Fighter Wing for 57 years. It says, Return With Honor. This Christmas, my wish for all of you – the aircrews... ground crews... air controllers... technicians... security police... nurses and doctors... and all who contribute to America's strength in the skies – is that you always uphold that motto as well as you're doing here in Aviano: That you complete every mission with skill and success and come back safely home.

Thank you for making our nation more secure and our world a better place. Happy holidays to you and your families. God bless you and God bless America.

###
This is my final trip abroad in 1997. I have visited many places where we have important relationships; from Mexico to Madrid, from South America to Vancouver, and to Europe on three separate occasions. Nowhere on earth is America’s presence more essential than right here in Sarajevo.

All our embassies, around the world, perform important work, but those of you working here play a special role: helping the Bosnian people build a peaceful future. Sarajevo is one of the most difficult assignments you can undertake. Most of you serve here without your families, on a volunteer basis. The work never ends—especially when a President is visiting. Through good times and bad, you have risen to the challenge magnificently. And someday, you will tell your grandchildren that you helped to reshape history. Day after day, month after month, your courage and hard work are giving the people of Bosnia the chance to rebuild their lives and their land.

Your efforts have shown the rest of the world that peace is not an abstract concept, or just a piece of paper. It is an achievable daily responsibility. And thanks to you, increasingly a daily reality.

Most people will never know how hard you work, often with limited resources. Most people will never know how many small steps it takes to build a lasting peace; how many meetings you have
arranged; how many tensions you have smoothed over; how many gulfs you have bridged. For two solid years, this embassy has worked around the clock to fulfill the promise we first glimpsed in Dayton. Many people have come and gone; but the mission continues, and I'd like to include all of you, past and present, when I say thank you.

The work you are doing here has immediate, local ramifications. Your commitment shows the Bosnian people that Americans will stand with them as they strive for a better future. But your work also sends an important, long-range message. It reminds people around the world that we are a generous nation, eager to help when the cause is just and our interests are challenged.

This airport was once a fierce battleground. Today, the sandbags and revetments are gone and the relief flights have long since ended. Commercial flights are landing, reconnecting the ties that bind Bosnia to Europe and the world community. When I was in Sarajevo early today, I heard people talking to each other, using words instead of weapons. When I was in the opera house, I heard Bosnians from all backgrounds making music together. As I was listening, I thought how proud I was that Americans like you helped to make this music possible.

So many of you have contributed in different ways. Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich [KAZ-la-rich] has traveled throughout Bosnia, and every day his leadership and knowledge give focus to the mission. [ Mrs. Anne Kauzlarich started a newsletter, the "Sarajevo Chronicle," for the international community.] Your DCM, Mike Senko, keeps everything running smoothly. Countless others help out... Craig Buck [US AID director]... Janet Garvey [USIS]... Jacques Klein and Bill Farrand at the OHR... Richard Frowick at the OSCE. You are all part of our team
here in Bosnia—and so are the many Americans serving in SFOR or working with dozens of civilian agencies and literally hundreds of voluntary organizations.

Most people think our foreign policy is done by treaties and conferences and elaborate rituals of protocol. The truth is foreign policy, like all politics, is a human business. As you represent the United States in this difficult post, you inspire confidence by building friendships with local people, offering advice, facilitating transactions, and generally building bridges between our two multi-ethnic peoples. So much of our success here has resulted from the kind of people you are.

I would like to especially thank the Bosnian people who serve in our embassy. I know many of you have lost loved ones, and all of you have lived in hardship. When the city was ravaged by war, you still came to work, sometimes in HUMVEEs, and you kept our embassy going. You have always been, and you will always be essential to our operations. We all draw strength from your devotion to duty, and your devotion to this beautiful country. To all the Bosnians here, I'd like to say, “Hvala” [ha-VA-la; Serbo-Croatian for “thank you”].

Today, I'd like to tell the embassy community: you honor all Americans by your service in Sarajevo. I am proud of you and so is our country. On behalf of all Americans, including our children and grandchildren, who I believe will inherit a more peaceful world, let me say thank you, God bless you and God bless America.

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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Unit 6140, Box 100
Aviano AB, Italy
APO AE 09601

31ST FIGHTER WING

The mission of the 31st Fighter Wing is to conduct and support air operations in the Southern Region and to maintain munitions for use as tasked by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and national authorities.

The 31st FW maintains two F-16 fighter squadrons, the 55th and the 510th, capable of conducting offensive and defensive air combat operations under NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and national taskings utilizing various weapon systems.

In peacetime, the 31st FW prepares for this role by maintaining its aircraft and personnel in a high state of readiness. The 31st FW also maintains the 603rd Air Control Squadron, capable of providing air surveillance, control and communications.

The 31st FW is the only operational fighter wing south of the Alps. During a crisis, the wing’s operational forces become part of the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force, located at Vicenza, Italy. This, and its strategic location, gives the 31st FW special importance in NATO’s Southern Region.

Beginning July 1994, the wing provided combat support for NATO’s first-ever operational mission, DENY FLIGHT. In August and September 1995, wing F-16s flew more than 400 combat sorties during Operation DELIBERATE FORCE, paving the way for implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord. With the formal signing of this accord on December 21, 1995, Operation DENY FLIGHT ended and the wing’s emphasis shifted to support Operation DECISIVE EDGE. The 31st FW currently supports the Bosnia mission as part of Operation DELIBERATE GUARD.

Headquarters 16th Air Force, the 31st FW’s parent unit, exercises command and control of U.S. Air Force units in Italy, Greece, Spain and Turkey.

The 31st FW also supports five geographically separated units: 31st Munitions Squadron, Camp Darby, Italy; 31st Munitions Support Squadron, Ghedi AB, Italy; 731st MUNSS, Araxos, Greece; 31st RED HORSE Flight, Camp Darby, Italy; and the 496th Air Base Squadron, Moron AB, Spain.

(Current as of September 1997)
Aviano Air Base is located at the northern end of the Po Valley, the largest agricultural plain in Italy. Nestled at the base of the Dolomites (the Pre-Alps), Aviano is just 35 minutes from skiing during the winter at Piancavallo. During the summer, an hour drive takes you to the beaches of the Adriatic. If you’re trying to find Aviano on a map, the nearest city (10 minutes from the base) is Pordenone. Venice is only an hour and a half away by auto or train.

Aviano Air Base is home of ...

- Headquarters, 16th Air Force
- 31st Fighter Wing
- Many TDY units supporting Operation DECISIVE EDGE

The 16th Air Force is the Headquarters serving the Southern Region or Mediterranean Region. The major bases include Aviano and Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. Additional sites include Ghedi-Torre, Camp Darby, Araxos, Torrejon Air Base, as well as many communications sites.

The 31st Fighter Wing is home to two F-16 fighter squadrons, the 510 FS and the 555 FS. Both squadrons relocated from Ramstein AB in 1994 and were redesignated. The wing was redesignated from the 401st Fighter Wing to the 31st Fighter Wing in 1994 as the base took on permanently based aircraft for the first time in over 50 years. The wing is also home to the 603d Air Control Squadron. More information is available on the Wing's history.

**DENY FLIGHT**

Since April of 1993, Aviano Air Base has hosted aircraft from every branch of the DoD and multiple countries in support of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 836, 958, and 981; and Operation DENY FLIGHT over Bosnia. At the time of this writing, the flightline is hosting USAF F-16s and EC-130 ABCCCs, Navy E-6A Prowlers, Marine F-18s, Army helicopters, and British AWACS. At various times we have also hosted F-15s, EF-111 Ravens, and others. We included several photos of current operations in our photo gallery.

webmaster@aviano.af.mil

Return to Aviano's home page
The Life and Times of the 31st Fighter Wing

The wing has a long and proud heritage that spans several decades at multiple locations.

World War II
Post World War II
Cuban Missile Crisis
Viet Nam
Recent History
A New Home ... A New Mission

World War II

The 31st Fighter Wing was activated on 1 February 1940 as the 31st Pursuit Group (PG) by the Army Air Corps at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Comprised of two operational squadrons - the 39th and 40th Pursuit Squadrons (PS), its mission was interceptor training in both the P-35 and P-40 aircraft.

In September 1941, the Group was reassigned to Baer Field, Indiana, and following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, it was subsequently moved to Paine Field, Washington, to prepare for overseas movement. The following month, the 39th and 40th PSs, and 31st PG gained the predecessors of its current squadrons: the 307th, 308th, and 309th PSs. At the same time, the unit was redesignated as the 31st Fighter Group (FG).

Five months later, the 31st FG rotated to Atcham AB, United Kingdom, to begin training in the British built Spitfire fighter. On 19 August, 2Lt Samuel Junkins of the 31st FG became the first American to shoot down a German aircraft operating over the British Isles. In October, the group was transferred to Gibraltar to assist in the invasion of North Africa. During that campaign, the group destroyed 51 enemy aircraft and damaged 38 more. The 31st FG remained in the Mediterranean Theater for the remainder of the European conflict joining in the invasions of Sicily, Italy, and southern France. In the summer of 1944, the Spitfires were replaced by the P-51 Mustangs.

The first of two Distinguished Unit citations for the group was earned for its participation in the famous oil field bombing raids on Ploesti, Romania. The second was awarded following missions to Poland and the Soviet Union.

Post World War II

At the close of World War II, the group was inactivated at Drew Field, Florida. Inactivation was short and in August 1946, the 31 FG was reactivated at Giebelstadt, Germany, to serve as part of the occupation forces. In July 1947, the group was reassigned to Langley Field, Virginia, and became part of the new Tactical Air Command. Two months later, the group was moved without people or equipment, to Turner Field, Georgia, and redesignated the 31st Fighter Wing (FW).
By August 1948, the Wing was operational and flying the F-84. During the Berlin Airlift, many of its members were temporarily assigned to Rhein-Main AB, Germany. On New Year's Day, 1950, the 31st FW was again redesignated, to the 31st Fighter Bomber Wing (FBW). Following this change, the unit transferred from TAC to the Strategic Air Command. Six months later, the unit was again redesignated, becoming the 31st Fighter Escort Wing (FEW).

Colonel David Schilling, 31st FEW Commander, made aviation history on 22 September 1950, by becoming the first pilot to fly non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean in a jet aircraft. Colonel Schilling made the crossing from England to Maine in an F-84 and was handed the 1950 Harmon Trophy for his feat.

Before 1950 was over, the 31st FEW moved from Turner AFB flying the new F-84G fighter. During this period, the wing began upgrading the F-100. Also, in September 1950, the 30th Fighter Bomber Squadron was activated and assigned to the 31st FBW. In January 1953, the wing was once again renamed the 31st Fighter Bomber Wing (FBW) and returned to TAC. On 1 July 1958, the 31st FBW became known as the 31st TFW and less than a year later transferred from its home at Turner to George AFB, California.

**Cuban Missile Crisis**

The stay at George was short due to tensions building with Cuba in early 1962. At this time the 31st TFW moved from George to Homestead AFB, where - with the exception of a Vietnam tour and short-term deployments elsewhere - it has remained ever since.

The 31st TFW's participation in military operations surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 brought the unit its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Throughout the crisis, the 31st TFW kept updating its projected target listing and stood prepared to strike at a moment's notice.

Aviation history was made by the 31st again when the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron flew 6,600 miles non-stop from Homestead AFB to Cigli AB, Turkey, on 8 February 1964. This was the longest mass flight of jet aircraft across the Atlantic using in-flight refueling. For this effort the wing was recognized with the TAC's Outstanding Fighter Wing Award for 1964.

**Viet Nam**

The Wing's involvement with the Vietnam War began in June 1965, with the 307th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) being deployed to Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. Six months later, the 308th TFS replaced the 307th at that site. Also, by this time the F-100s had been replaced with the state-of-the-art F-4 Phantom.

The year 1966 saw more overseas deployments with the 309th relieving the 306th at Cigli AB in January. In April, the 307th TFS had a permanent change of station move to Torrejon AB, Spain. In November, the 308th TFS relocated from Bien Hoa to Tuy Hoa. While stationed in Vietnam, the Wing was assigned Pacific Air Command's 7th Air Force. The unit provided extensive air support during the 1968 Tet Offensive and also the siege of the Khe Sahn in February 1968. By September 1968, the Wing had flown more than 100,000 combat sorties against targets in Southeast Asia and garnered its third and fourth Outstanding Unit Awards.

On 15 October 1970, the 31st TFW returned to Homestead AFB. In early 1972, elements of the Wing returned to Southeast with the 308th locating to Udorn Royal Thai AB, Thailand. Replacing

http://www.aviano.af.mil/hh/31fw.html 12/17/97
the 308th at Udorn, the 307th TFS recorded its first air victory in the Vietnam conflict in October when two crew members shot down a MIG-21 aircraft northeast of Hanoi. The 307th TFS returned to Homestead AFB in November while the 308th rotated to Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, where it remained until the American presence would down in Spring, 1973.

In addition to the Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, the Wing, during its Southeast Asia service, was recognized with a Presidential Citation, and two Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palms.

**Recent History**

The Wing's operational mission at Homestead continued through the mid-and late 1970's. On 30 March 1981, the Wing was handed a dual mission: In addition to its operational function, the unit would be responsible for training aircrews in the F-4. In recognition of their mission, the wing was redesignated the 31st Tactical Training Wing (TTW). It remained so until 1 October 1985, when the 31st TTW once again became the 31st TFW.

In mid-1985, the Wing began the process of converting from the F-4 Phantom to the state-of-the-art F-16 Fighting Falcon. The final squadron, the 307th Tactical Training Squadron (TTS), was redesignated the 307th TFS 25 March 1988 and completed conversion to the F-16 that summer. Deployment for the fighter squadrons continued throughout 1988 and 1989, as evidenced by wing participation in Red Flag, Air Warrior, Combat Archer, and other local and command-generated exercises.

Conversion to the F-16 A/B aircraft began in late summer of 1985 and completed in 1988 with the 31st FW having three operational F-16 squadrons. Due to Air Force restructuring and base closure related actions, the 30th TFS was slated for inactivation. Inactivation occurred 28 April 1989 with mission requirements, operational commitments, some aircraft and personnel transferring the remaining F-16 squadrons - the 308th and 309th TFSs. The spring of 1991 saw the Wing upgrade from the F-16 A/B aircraft to the Block 40 F-16 C/D models. In 1991, base closure and realignment announcements allowed the 31st FW to become one of the few bases to gain assets during this cutback with the 307th TFS being reactivated bringing the wing back to three full fighter squadrons.

Summer 1992 brought the worst natural disaster to hit the United States - Hurricane Andrew. Immediately prior to the storm, all 31st FW assets deployed to Safe Havens across the country finally settling at Moody AFB, Georgia, and Shaw AFB, South Carolina. From the hurricane (August 1992) until June 1993, the 31st FW performed salvage and recovery functions. Assets totaling over $900 million have been recovered to date. During the 1993 round of base closures and realignments, the Wing/base was recommended for complete closure (March 1993) by the secretary of defense. However, following regional hearings in May, the BRAC Commission instead recommended realignment of the base and deactivation of the Wing. In July 1993, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Dr. William Perry visited the base and announced the Wing and base would become the DoD's model closure/realignment facility.

Another chapter of the 31st FW's illustrious history concluded as the wing flag was furled and sheathed at the deactivation ceremony 31 March 1994 at Homestead AFB, Florida, and traveled across the Atlantic to its new home at Aviano AB, Italy.

**A New Home ... A New Mission**
The 31st was reactivated on 11 April 1994 in its new Italian home. It is equipped with two fighter squadrons comprising 36 F-16 C/D, Block 40 fighter aircraft and has more than 3000 military members assigned. Its mission is to provide support to 16th Air Force installations throughout Italy, Spain, Greece and is responsible for conducting air combat and combat support within United States Air Forces in Europe and NATO's Southern Region.

Return to Aviano's home page

Updated 22 Sep 97
The significance of the wing patch: "The Air Force colors, ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow, are separated by a wavy line symbolizing clouds. The wyvern, a mythological dragon, represents strength. It is depicted without legs to indicate that all of the unit's fighting is done in the air." Its motto is, "Return with honor."
TO: Vinca LaFlue, White House Speech Writer
FAX: 202-569-210
FROM: Capt Tracy O'Grady-Walsh
DATE: 12-18-97
SUBJECT: Aviano AB information
PAGES: 5
THE 31ST FIGHTER WING

The mission of the 31st Fighter Wing is to conduct and support air operations in the Southern Region and to maintain munitions for use as tasked by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and national authorities.

The 31st FW maintains two F-16 fighter squadrons, the 555th and the 510th, capable of conducting offensive and defensive air combat operations under NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and national taskings utilizing various weapon systems.

In peacetime, the 31st FW prepares for this role by maintaining its aircraft and personnel in a high state of readiness. The 31st FW also maintains the 603rd Air Control Squadron, capable of providing air surveillance, control and communications.

The wing is the only operational fighter base in the European Southern Region. During crisis, the wing's operational forces become part of the 5th Allied Tactical Air Force, located at Vicenza, Italy. This, and its strategic location, gives the 31st FW special importance in NATO's Southern Region.

Beginning July 1994, the wing provided combat support for NATO's first-ever operational mission, Deny Flight. In August and September 1995, wing F-16s flew more than 400 combat sorties during Operation Deliberate Force, paving the way for implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord. With the formal signing of this accord on December 21, 1995, Operation Deny Flight ended and the wing's emphasis shifted to support Operation Decisive Edge.

The wing has two major tenants: "E" Company, 502nd Aviation Regiment, Southern European Task Force, provides cargo and air support for NATO military personnel and equipment in the Mediterranean area and disaster relief to the host country upon request. Headquarters 16th Air Force, the 31st FW's parent unit, exercises command and control of U.S. Air Force units in Italy, Greece, Spain and Turkey. The 31st FW also supports five geographically separated units: 31st Munitions Squadron, Camp Darby, Italy; 631st Munitions Support Squadron, Ghedi AB, Italy; 731st MUNNS, Airmos, Greece; 31st RED HORSE Flight, Camp Darby, Italy; and the 496th Air Base Squadron, Moron AB, Spain.

AVIANO AIR BASE HISTORY

Aviano AB is adjacent to the town of Aviano at the foot of the Italian Alps, 50 miles north of Venice. There are approximately 3,100 military and more than 800 civilian personnel permanently assigned to the base, which is the only USAF air base in Italy.

Aviano's history predates the U.S. Air Force, going back to the early days of Italian military aviation. Aviano AB shares the distinction of being the "cradle of the Italian Air Force" with other airfields in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region.

Aviano AB began as an Italian military flying school in 1911. During WWI, Italians used the field in missions against Austrian-German armies. It was officially named Aeroporto Pagliano e Gori in honor of two Italian aviators — Capt. Maurizio Pagliano and Lt. Luigi Gori — who made an unauthorized, but heroic and successful, raid in the war. The two were killed during another mission in May 1917. Between the world wars, Aviano was a training, and an operational base that housed fighter and bomber squadrons.

During World War II the base was used by the Italian Air Force and German Luftwaffe. It was severely damaged by Allied bombings during the later stages of the war, and several years were required to return it to operational status.

After WWII, the Italian Air Force resumed command at Aviano. In 1955, the USAF moved there with Detachment 1, 17th AF. In December of that year, the first rotational squadron flew F-84 Thunderjets into Aviano to make the base operational. The 13-year rotational program came to an end with F-100s.

The U.S. and Italian governments signed a joint use agreement for Aviano in 1954. Since then, the following units have hosted USAF activities here: Detachment 1 of the 629th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron; the 7227th Combat Support Group, and the 40th Bombardment Group.

On May 4, 1992, the 40th Tactical Support Wing inactivated and was replaced by the 401st Fighter Wing from Torrejon AB, Spain. On April 11, 1994, the Air Force inactivated the 401st FW and reassigned the 31st FW from Homestead AFB, Florida to Aviano.
HISTORY OF THE 31ST FIGHTER WING

The 31st Fighter Wing was activated Feb. 1, 1940, as the 31st Pursuit Group (FG) by the Army Air Corps at Selfridge Field, Mich. Comprised of two operational squadrons, the 39th and 40th Pursuit Squadrons (PS), its mission was interceptor training in both the P-35 and P-40 aircraft.

In September 1941, the group was reassigned to Bader Field, Ind., and following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, it was subsequently moved to Paine Field, Wash., to prepare for overseas movement. The following month, the 31st FG gained the preeminence of its current squadrons: the 307th, 308th, and 309th PSs. At the same time, the unit was redesignated as the 31st Fighter Group.

Five months later, the 31st FG relocated to Atcham AB, United Kingdom, to begin training in the British-built Spitfire fighter. On Aug. 19, 1942, 2d Lt. Samuel Jenkins of the 31st FG became the first American to shoot down a German aircraft operating over the British Isles. In October, the group was transferred to Gibraltar to assist in the invasion of North Africa. During that campaign, the group destroyed 51 enemy aircraft and damaged 38 more. The 31st FG remained in the Mediterranean theater for the remainder of the European conflict, joining in the invasions of Sicily, Italy, and southern France. In the summer of 1944, the group’s Spitfires were replaced by the P-51 Mustangs.

The first official Distinguished Unit Citation for the group was earned for its participation in the famous oil field bombings raids on Ploesti, Romania. The second was awarded following missions to Poland and the Soviet Union.

At the close of World War II, the group was inactivated at Drew Field, Fla. Inactivation took place at the 31st FG was reactivated at Geilenkirchen, Germany, in August 1945, to serve as part of the occupation forces. In July 1947, the group was reassigned to Langley Field, Va., and became part of the new Tactical Air Command. Two months later, the group was moved without personnel or equipment, to Turner Field, Ga., and redesignated the 31st Fighter Wing.

By August 1948, the wing was operational and flying the F-84. During the Berlin Airlift, many of its members were temporarily assigned to Rhein-Main AB, Germany. On New Year’s Day, 1950, the 31st FW was again redesignated, as the 31st Fighter Bomber Wing. Following this change, the unit transferred from TAC to the Strategic Air Command. Six months later, the unit was again redesignated, becoming the 31st Fighter Escort Wing.

Col. David Schilling, 31st FW command, made aviation history Sept. 22, 1950, by becoming the first pilot to fly non-stop across the Atlantic Ocean in a jet aircraft. Colonel Schilling made the crossing from England to Maine in an F-84 and was handed the 1950 Harmon Trophy for his feat.

In September 1950, the 308th Fighter Bomber Squadron was activated and assigned to the 31st FEW. In January 1953, the wing was once again redesignated the 31st Fighter Bomber Wing and returned to TAC. On July 1, 1958, the 31st FW became known as the 31st FW and less than a year later transferred from its home at Turner to George AFB, Calif.

The stay at George was short due to tensions building with Cuba in early 1962. At this time the 31st FW moved from George to Homestead AFB, Fla., where — with the exception of a Vietnam tour and short-term deployments elsewhere — it remained until 1993.

The 31st FW’s participation in military operations surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962 brought the unit its second Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. Throughout the crisis, the 31st FW kept its F-100s on constant alert and stood down a moment’s notice.

Aviation history was made by the 1st again when the 308th Tactical Fighter Squadron flew 2,600 miles non-stop from Homestead AFB to Cigli AB, Turkey, Feb. 8, 1964. This was the longest non-stop flight of jet aircraft across the Atlantic using in-flight refueling. For this effort, the wing was recognized with TAC’s Outstanding Flying Wing Award for 1964.

The wing’s involvement with the Vietnam War began in June 1965, with the 307th Tactical Fighter Squadron being deployed to Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. Six months later, the 308th TFS replaced the 308th at that site. Also, by this time the F-100s had been replaced with the state-of-the-art F-4 Phantom.

In 1964, the wing saw more overseas deployments with the 309th relieving the 308th at Cigli AB in January. In April, the 307th TFS had a permanent change of station move to Torrejon AB, Spain. In November, the 308th TFS relocated from Bien Hoa to Tuy Hoa. While stationed in Vietnam, the wing was assigned to Pacific Air Command’s 7th Air Force. The unit provided extensive air support during the 1968 Tet Offensive and also the siege of Khe Sahn in February 1968. By September 1968, the wing had flown more than 100,000 combat sorties against targets in Southeast Asia and garnered its third and fourth Outstanding Unit Awards.

Oct. 15, 1970, saw the 31st FW return to Homestead AFB. In early 1972, elements of the wing return to Southeast Asia with the 308th locating to Udon Royal Thai AB, Thailand. Replacing the 308th at Udon the 307th TFS recorded its first air victory in the Vietnam conflict in October when two crew members shot down a MiG-21 aircraft northeast of Hanoi. The 307th TFS returned to Homestead AFB in November while the 308th returned to Udon Royal Thai AB, Thailand, where it remained until the American presence wound down Spring, 1973.

In addition to the Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, the wing, during its Southeast Asia service, recognized with a Presidential Citation, and two Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm.

The wing’s operational mission at Homestead continued through the mid- and late-1970’s. On March 1981, the wing was handed a dual mission: in addition to its operational function, the wing would be responsible for training aircrews in the F-4. In recognition of their mission, the wing was redesignated the 31st Tactical Training Wing. It remained so until Oct. 1, 1985, when the 31st TFW once again became the 31st FW.

In mid-1985, the wing began the process of converting from the F-4 Phantom to the state-of-the-art F-16 Fighting Falcon. The final squadron, the 307th Tactical Training Squadron, was redesignated the 307th TFS on March 23, 1988, and completed conversion to the F-16 that summer. Deployment for the fighter squadron continued throughout 1988 and 1989, as evidenced by wing participation in Red Flag, Air Warrior, Combat Archer, and other local and command-generated exercises.

Conversion to the F-16 AB aircraft began in the late summer of 1985 and was completed in 1988 with 31st FW having three operational F-16 squadrons. Due to Air Force restructuring and base closure related action, the 307th TFS was slated for inactivation. Inactivation occurred April 28, 1989 with mission requirement operational commitments, some aircraft and personnel transferring to the remaining F-16 squadrons — the 309th and 309th TFSs. In the spring of 1991, the wing upgraded from F-16A/B aircraft to block 50/60-C/D model. In 1991, basestation and rearmament assignments allowed the 31st TFW to become one of the few bases to gain access to this cutback within the 307th TFS reactivation bringing the wing back to three full fighter squadrons.

Summer 1992 brought the worst natural disaster to hit the United States — Hurricane Andrew. Immediately prior to the storm, all 31st FW aircraft deployed to safe havens across the country finally settling at Moody AFB, Ga., and Shaw AFB, S.C. From the hurricane (August 1992) until June 1993, the 31st FW performed search and recovery functions. Assets totaling more than $900 million have been recovered to date. During the 15 round of base closures and realignments, the wing/base was recommended for complete closure (March 1993) by the secretary of defense. However, following regional hearings in May, the BRAC Commission instead recommended realignment of the base and deactivation of the wing. In July 1993, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Dr. William Perry visited the base and announced the wing and base would become the Deputy of Defense’s model closure/realignment facility.

Another chapter of the 31st FW’s illustrious history concluded as the wing flag was furled and the deactivation ceremony March 31, 1994, at Homestead AFB, Fla., and travelled across the Atlantic to its new home at Aviano AB, Italy.

The 31st FW reactivated at its new Italian home April 1, 1994. The wing’s mission is to provide support to 16th Air Forces installations throughout Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey and is responsible for conducting combat and support combat within United States Air Force Europe and NATO’s Southern Region. The 31st FW is equipped with two fighter squadrons, the 354th and the 310th Fighter Squadrons. The squadrons maintain 36 F-16C/D Block 40 fighter aircraft. The wing is also responsible for the 603d Air Control Squadron which provides command and control functions, air surveillance and communications.

The wing has three major tenants. An Army helicopter unit, “E” Company, 502nd Aviation Regiment, Southern European Task Force, with CH-47Ds. The 31st FW also supports five geographically separated units, 31st Munitions Squadron, Camp Darby, Italy; 631st Munitions Support Squadron, Ghedi AB, Italy; 732 MUNNS, Araxos, Greece; 31st RED HORSE Flight, Camp Darby, Italy; and the 495th Air Base Squadron, Moren AB, Spain.

Beginning July 1994, the 31st FW provided combat support for NATO’s first-ever operational mission, Desert Shield, August 1990 to September 1990, wing’s F-16 flew more than 400 combat sorties during Operation Desert Force, paving the way for implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord. With the formal signing of this accord on December 21, 1995, Operation Desert Shield ended and the wing’s emphasis shifted to support Operation Enduring Freedom.
31st Operations Support Squadron

Originally established as the 401st Operations Support Squadron (401 OSS) May 4, 1992, with the implementation of the objective wing structure, it was the focal point for all flying operations located at Aviano Air Base to include NATO and United States exercises and contingency activities. At its inception, the organization consisted of six flights: Current Operations, Weather, Airfield Operations, Air Traffic Control, Operations Plans, and Intelligence.

With the advent of Operation Deny Flight, a provisional operations group was established at Aviano. Under the direction of the group commander, the 401st OSS acted as the primary support arm for operational issues for all deployed flying squadrons and a deployed air control squadron, as well as for issues related to the beddown of permanent aircraft and related wing expansion activities.

On April 1, 1994, the unit was redesignated the 31st OSS under the newly formed 31st Operations Group. The 31st OSS was joined by two fighter squadrons and one air control squadron. With the redesignation, the unit received an additional flight, Weapons and Tactics.

555th Fighter Squadron

The 555th Fighter Squadron transferred to Aviano Air Base from Luke AFB, Ariz., April 1, 1994, changed over to the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and immediately took an active role in supporting Operation Deny Flight, the United Nations mandate for no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The squadron is equipped with 18 F-16 C/D Block 40 aircraft. It is tasked with conducting offensive and defensive operations under NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and national tasks with various weapon systems.

The "Triple Nickel" history begins when the 555th Bombardment Squadron-Medium was constituted Nov. 25, 1942. U.S. Army Air Forces activated the 555th with B-26 medium bombers Dec. 1, 1943. The squadron received A-26 aircraft in June 1945 and became the 555th Bombardment Squadron Medium.

As part of the 386th Bombardment Group, the 555th saw combat in Europe from bases in England, France and Belgium.

On April 1, 1994, the unit was redesignated the 31st OSS under the newly formed 31st Operations Group. The 31st OSS was joined by two fighter squadrons and one air control squadron. With the redesignation, the unit received an additional flight, Weapons and Tactics.

The squadron returned to combat from Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, scoring its first two victories April 22, 1966. One week later, the Nickels gained the distinction of first "Ace" squadron in Southeast Asia with six kills.

In June 1966, the 555th TFS moved to Udorn RTAFB, joining the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. While stationed at Udorn, the Triple Nicks downed an additional 14 aircraft including four MiG-21s Jan. 21, 1967. The Nickels was now the only "Quad Ace" Fighter squadron in Southeast Asia, with 20 MiGs to its credit.

In 1968, 555th aircraft participated in the interdiction campaign against the Ho Chi Minh Trail until the Linebacker Campaigns against the North Vietnamese in 1972. During Linebacker I and II, the 555th scored another 20 MiG kills. The victories brought the Nickels' total to 46 — producing the first two USAF aces.

For combat operations in Southeast Asia, the 555th TFS was awarded three more Presidential Unit Citations, five Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with the combat "V" device, the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm and the 1973 Hughes Achievement Award.

On Nov. 14, 1974, President Gerald Ford was present when the Nickels received the USAF's first operational F-15 Eagle at Luke AFB. Later, the Nickels moved to the F-15E Strike Eagle.

The 555th's first year at Aviano AB, Italy included participation in NATO's first-ever combat air strike. The Nickels engaged 209 combat sorties during Operation Deliberate Force, while delivering the highest bombs-on-target of any participating unit. The success of this air campaign was a major contributing factor in the accomplishment of an ensuing peace accord and withdrawal of troops and equipment throughout the former Yugoslavia.

The "World Famous, Highly Respected" Triple Nickel continues to support Operation Decisive Edge, providing close air support for NATO's overall Operation Decisive Endeavor, an ongoing effort to maintain the region's ceasefire and preserve the peace.

603rd Air Control Squadron

In the European Theater, the U.S. Air Forces in Europe operates a Theater Air Control System in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization ground forces. The 603rd Air Control Squadron is one of the TACS elements which is the responsibility of exercising decentralized command and control of air resources in the event of periods of hostility accompanied by loss of communication. The specified mission of the 603rd ACS is to equip a mobile unit capable of providing radar control and surveillance within a designated area, to collect, display and disseminate information of aerial activity and to provide radar coverage for the control of air forces. The squadron is further tasked to provide radar control support for friendly aircraft in an offensive role against ground targets, and in a defensive mission against airborne threats.

The main operations equipment used by the 603rd ACS is the Modular Control Equipment. The MCE provides facilities for: accepting inputs from search radar and identification friend from foe systems, and performing automatic track correlation, acquisition, identification, classification, tracking, threat evaluation and weapon detection and assignment.

510th Fighter Squadron

The 510th Fighter Squadron activated as part of the 31st FW at Aviano Air Base, Italy, July 1, 1994, changed over to the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft and immediately took an active role by providing its sister squadron, the 555th FS, with additional pilots to help fulfill the Triple Nickel's role supporting Deny Flight, the United Nations mandate for no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The squadron is equipped with 18 F-16 C/D Block 40 aircraft and is tasked with conducting offensive and defensive operations under NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Europe and national tasks with various weapon systems.

The squadron originally activated as the 625th Bombardment Squadron (Dive) Feb. 24, 1943, as Drew Field, Fla. Its initial aircraft was the Douglas A-24, a land-based version of the U.S. Navy Dauntless dive bomber. The squadron was assigned to the 405th Bombardment Group (later Field, Fla.). It was redesignated the 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron Aug. 10, 1943, and moved to Waterloo Army Air Field, S.C., Sept. 13, 1943. During this time, the squadron transitioned to the Bell P-39 Airacobra and later to the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. Moving to Europe March 6, 1944, the squadron began combat operations from Crotch, England, April 11, 1944. The 510th followed the Allied armies as they advanced toward Germany with moves to Piccardville and St. Dizier, France, Aviano, Belgium, and Kitzingen, Germany, when the war ended. The men and women of the 510th earned seven World War II campaign streamers. On Oct. 23, 1945, the squadron was deactivated at Camp Kehrer, N.J.

The squadron was reactivated Dec. 1, 1952, at Goodan AFB, Ky., and was again designated the 510th Fighter-Bomber Squadron flying Republic F-84 Thunderjets. They moved to Langley AFB, Va., April 17, 1953, where the unit transitioned to the North American F-100s. The squadron transferred to England AFB, La., March 13, 1964, and was assigned to the 3rd Tactical Fighter Wing. On Nov. 10, 1965, the 510th moved to Bien Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, where it flew more than 27,000 sorties. The 510th earned 11 more campaign streamers in Vietnam. The squadron deactivated Nov. 15, 1969, and reactivated at RAF Bentwaters, England, Oct. 1, 1978. At that time, it became the second squadron equipped with the Fairchild Republic A-10 Thunderbolt II to begin operations with the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing. While assigned to the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing at RAF Bentwaters the squadron deployed for three months in the autumn of 1991 to support United Nations coalition forces in Operation Desert Storm, as well as Operation Provide Comfort, in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

On Jan. 14, 1993, the 510th was assigned to the 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany, becoming the only A-10 squadron in USAFE. The squadron deactivated Feb. 25, 1994, and reactivated July 1, 1994, under the 31st Operations Group.

On November 14, 1992, the squadron became USAFE's first F-16 squadron to fly combat missions using Low Altitude Navigation System with precision guided munitions. In April 1995, the squadron assumed an additional role as airborne forward air controllers, one of the first two squadrons ever to be employed in this mission.

The 510th flew 260 combat sorties during Operation Deliberate Force over the former Yugoslavia in September 1995, and continues to support the peace implementation force of Operation Decisive Edge.
SIXTEENTH AIR FORCE

Sixteenth Air Force, headquartered at Aviano Air Base, is one of two numbered Air Forces that comprise the U.S. Air Forces in Europe command. The focus of 16th AF is to exercise command and control of assigned USAFE resources in the Mediterranean area as an extension of Headquarters USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany.

Approximately 8,000 U.S. military and civilian personnel comprise 16th AF in bases and units throughout the Southern Mediterranean region in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. 16th AF stands ready as a vital link in USAFE to deter war by receiving and supporting deployed aircraft from the continental United States to the command's main and collocated operating bases in the southern region. The 16th AF War Support System was established to help make the quick transition from peacetime to a war-fighting posture. A 16th AF War Support Center and Mission Support Center at Aviano AB and Ankara Air Station, Turkey, were established in 1988 to coordinate and plan the command's wartime missions with NATO officials.

History

The Air Administration (Spain), Joint United States Military Group, was redesignated July 15, 1956, as Headquarters, 16th Air Force. The group had been operating under the auspices of the Spanish-American Agreement of 1953. Existing Spanish Air Force (SAF) bases were expanded near Madrid, Seville and Zaragoza under the authority of the 1953 agreement. This agreement also led to the construction of a transpacific pipeline system from Rota in southern Spain to Zaragoza in northern Spain.

Headquarters 16th AF was reassigned from Headquarters USAFE to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) July 1, 1957. The main bases in Spain were used for SAC B-47 rotational alert aircraft until April 1955. Sixteenth AF also operated SAC bases in Morocco from 1958 through 1963. The American forces participated with the Spanish forces in a joint operation of an air defense system for Spain from 1957 to 1964. The 64th Air Division was the principal USAF unit involved in the defense system and it was comprised of seven aircraft squadrons and a fighter command. Two squadrons of EF-106's and later F-102's were assigned permanently to Torrejon and Zaragoza ABs. An additional squadron of F-102D's and later F-4D's was assigned on a rotational basis to Moron AB. These units cooperated with and provided training for Spanish controllers and fighter aircraft. From the inception of this cooperative defense effort until April 1960, the 65th AD was assigned to 16th AF and then to USAFE where it remained until the SAF took over the operation of the system in 1964. 16th Air Force then continued to operate bases with the Spanish air defense system, currently through its 7166th Tactical Control Flight.

16th AF was reassigned to USAFE in April 1966. A year after SAC withdrew its B-47 alert force from Spain, Torrejon and Moron ABs maintained active after SAC's withdrawal and Zaragoza AB was converted to standby status in 1966 and a modified caretaker status in 1965. The 401st Tactical Fighter Wing, with its three squadrons of F-102D's, was disestablished from the continental United States to Torrejon AB. The wing converted to F-4 aircraft and then the F-16 in 1983.

16th AF assumed administrative and logistical support responsibilities for USAFE forces in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Libya in 1969 because of the reorganization of intermediate command responsibilities with USAFE. Responsibilities for Libya were assumed in April 1970 of the 78th Flying Training Wing at the U.S. Air Force Training Command. Moron AB, previously known as the 401st Tactical Fighter Training Wing, was converted to the 406th Tactical Fighter Training Wing at Zaragoza, Spain. (Closed 1982.)

A dual-hatted arrangement was instituted in 1973 with the commander of Allied Force Southern Europe taking command of 16th AF as an additional duty. The vice commander continued to supervise the command on a daily basis from 16th AF headquarters at Torrejon AB. In 1981 the command position reverted to the headquarters at Torrejon AB. Headquarters 16th Air Force moved to Aviano AB in August 1992.

Throughout 1994, 16th AF supported Operation Deny Flight, enforcing the U.N. ordered no-fly zone over Bosnia. In the fall of 1995, 16th Air Force, command control facilities, and aircraft supported Operation Deliberate Force, the U.N. sanctioned/NATO-authorized attack on Bosnian-Serb forces. 16th AF has been actively involved in Joint Endeavor, a NATO peacekeeping mission to the former Yugoslavia, by operating airfields at Zagreb, Croatia; Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Further east, the 19th Wing, Incirlik AB, Turkey, continues to support the United States' relief mission to the Kurds of northern Iraq.

4190TH PROVISIONAL WING

The 4190th Provisional Wing (PW) activated at Aviano Air Base, Italy, June 30, 1995, bringing various aircraft and personnel deployed in support of Operation Deny Flight and as of Dec. 21, 1995 Operation Deliberate Edge under a single chain of command.

The 4190th was changed to the 4190th Provisional Wing January 1, 1996.

The provisional wing is administratively separate from the 31st Fighter Wing with its own budget in NATO chain of command.

The 31st FW Commander, Brig. Gen. Charles F. Wald, and the 31st Operations Group Commander, Col. Marc Rogers, are dual-hatted as wing commander and operations group commander of the 4190th PW.

With the creation of the "composite" wing, all Defcreate Edge operations still fall under a single umbrella of the 4190th PW. The rest remain part of the 31stFW.

AVIANO'S SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

OPERATIONS DENY FLIGHT/DECISIVE EDGE

On Oct. 16, 1992, NATO forces began monitoring flights in the airspace over Bosnia-Herzegovina in its first operational mission. This was in response to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 781, which requested member states to take steps nationally, or through regional agencies to assist UN protection forces to monitor the ban on military flights in that airspace. In April 1993, Aviano-based aircraft began to patrol the "no-fly" zone. Early 1994, Aviano supported 46 aircraft dedicated to Deny Flight, and at the height of the operation, supported more than 65 aircraft in the combat mission conducted under Deny Flight.

The operation entered its third year April 12, 1995, with approximately 15,000 "no-fly" zone sorties flown over Bosnia-Herzegovina from Aviano.

By mid-December of 1995, Aviano was the main platform for almost 1,000 Airborne troops from the Southern European Task Force headquartered for duty at Tuzla, Bosnia, as part of Operation Joint Endeavor. It continues to support that air base with weekly resupply missions.

After nearly 1,000 days and over 100,000 flights, Operation Deny Flight ended Dec. 21, 1995.

For the first time, a large number of people deployed in support of the operation, they continue to do the same job under the same intensity under a new name: Operation Decisive Edge. As of Jan. 18, more than 662 Decisive Edge sorties have been flown.

Aviano's role in the Southern Region is vital and its location is central for the theater. The base continues to grow even after warring factions in Bosnia maintain their own peace.
AVIANO KEY PERSONNEL

16th AF Deputy Commander ....................................................... Brig. Gen. Timothy A. Peppe
16th AF Vice Commander .......................................................... Col. Stephen B. Maddox
31st Fighter Wing Commander ..................................................... Brig. Gen. Charles F. Wald
31st FW Vice Commander .......................................................... Col. Steven Tenke
31st FW Senior Enlisted Advisor .................................................. CMSgt. Michael L. Myers
31st Operations Group Commander ............................................. Col. Marc E. Rogers
555th Fighter Squadron Commander ............................................. Lt. Col. Guy Dahlbeck
510th Fighter Squadron Commander ............................................ Lt. Col. Edward J. Ryder
603rd Air Control Squadron ....................................................... Lt. Col. Anthony H. Rebecchi
31st Support Group Commander ................................................ Col. Gary C. LaGassey
31st Logistics Group Commander ............................................... Col. David L. Stringer
31st Medical Group Commander ............................................... Col. (Dr.) Horace R. Carson

AVIANO AIR BASE
ECONOMIC IMPACT 1996

PERSONNEL ASSIGNED
Total Military (Active Duty) ..................................................... 3,364
Geographically-separated units ................................................ 654
Civilian Employees .....................................................................
U.S. ......................................................................................... 820
Non-U.S. ................................................................................ 649
Dependents .............................................................................. 3,772

ECONOMICS (Dollars, in millions)
Military Payroll ......................................................................... 118.4 mil
Civilian Payroll .......................................................................... 28.3 mil
NAF Employee Payroll ............................................................. 9.03 mil
Contracts and Construction ....................................................... 63.7 mil

VALUE OF CAPITAL ASSETS
Property/Facilities ...................................................................... 268 mil
Leased ...................................................................................... 1.8 mil
All Equipment ............................................................................ 219.1 mil
Inventories – Stock Fund (Supply) .............................................. 100.3 mil
Retail Sales: Base Exchange ..................................................... 1.1 mil
Commissary ............................................................................. 8.2 mil
31st Services Squadron (gross sales) .......................................... 6.6 mil
Base Operations and Maintenance (Includes Airlift Service Industrial Fund) .......................................................... 71.1 mil
Weapons Systems ..................................................................... 672 mil
Land — .................................................................................... 1,162 acres
Runway Length — .................................................................... 8,592 feet
Operation Season's Greetings makes holidays merry, bright

By Lisa Kennelly
Staff writer

Operation Season's Greetings, the annual Christmas concert presented by the 31st Fighter Wing and U.S. Air Forces in Europe, kicks off at 7 p.m. Dec. 18 in Hangar One on the Flightline Area.

This year's free concert offers something for everyone. The Miracles croon the sounds of Motown, Juanita Williams performs the sultry blues and country singer, Mila Mason, struts her stuff.

The Miracles, who have been thrilling audiences for 40 years, were one of the original Motown names and have songs that include "Shop Around," "I Second that Emotion" and "Tears of a Clown."

Williams, an SR-71 Blackbird aircraft crew chief turned singer, has captured the hearts of rhythm and blues, jazz, pop and gospel fans around the world. Her acclaimed singing has earned her a Grammy nomination and a command performance for President Bill Clinton.

Here for an encore performance, Mason's arsenal of music now includes hit singles such as "That's Enough of That," "Dark Horse" and "That's the Kind Of Love (That I'm Talking About)."

Other events tied to Operation Season's Greetings include a toy drive and art contest.

The Marines of Marine Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron-2 assigned here on temporary duty from Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., have started a special Operation Season's Greetings toy drive. Gifts for needy children are collected at the main exchange and shoppette Saturday and Sunday and Dec. 13 and 14.

The Marines gather the final gifts and distribute them at the Operation Season's Greetings concert.

http://www.aviano.af.mil/vigil/971205/3vig5dec.html 12/15/97
The Aviano High School sponsors a "Buon Natale di Aviano" Art Contest. Students in grades 7-12 compete in areas of vocal/instrumental, art and multi-media categories for a chance to officially represent Aviano at a luncheon with the stars who perform at the concert.

The performers sign autographs and meet with fans Dec. 18 at noon at the main exchange mall.

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Return to Aviano's home page
BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

31st Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office
Unit 6140, Box 100
Aviano AB, Italy
APO AE 09801

BRIGADIER GENERAL TIMOTHY A. PEPPE

Brigadier General Timothy A. Peppe is the commander of the 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano Air Base, Italy. Flying the only permanently assigned U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Southern Region, the 31st Fighter Wing conducts and supports air combat operations in the European Southern Region and maintains munitions for use as tasked by NATO and national authorities. He is also responsible for the operations of U.S. Air Force, Marine, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard and British and Canadian aircraft flying from Aviano under the 31st Air Expeditionary Wing.

The general entered the Air Force in 1970 as a graduate of the North Carolina State Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Prior to assuming his current position, he was the Combined Air Operations Center deputy commander. He also commanded a specialized undergraduate pilot training program wing from 1994-1996. He has served as Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Policy, Headquarters AIRSOUTH, Naples, Italy; Support Group commander, Williams AFB, Ariz., and Chief, Rated Management Branch, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington D.C. He is a command pilot with more than 3,400 flight hours.

General Peppe and his wife, Murray Dale, are both Tennesseans. They have four children, Cyndi, Scott, Kathryn and Tiffany.

EDUCATION:

1970 Bachelor of science degree, N.C. State University
1975 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.
1982 Master of arts degree in business administration, Webster University
1984 Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Va.
1989 Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS:

5. April 1975-July 1975, RF-4C aircraft commander, 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Udorn, Thailand.


7. July 1977-May 1980, RF-4C instructor pilot, flight commander, branch chief, standardization and evaluation division, 18th Tactical Fighter Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.


11. October 1984-July 1988, chief, standardization and evaluation division, 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and operations officer and commander, 38th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Zweibrucken Air Base, West Germany.


19. July 1997-present, commander, 31st Fighter Wing, Aviano Air Base, Italy.

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:**

Rating: Command pilot  
Flight hours: 3,400  
Aircraft flown: T-37, T-38, RF-4C, F-16

**MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:**

Defense Superior Service Medal  
Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters  
Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster  
Joint Meritorious Unit Award  
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  

Air Force Organizational Excellence Award  
Combat Readiness Medal  
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal  
Armed Forces Service Medal  
NATO Medal

**EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION:**

- Second lieutenant: June 3, 1970
- First lieutenant: Dec 3, 1971
- Captain: Dec 3, 1973
- Major: May 1, 1982
- Lieutenant colonel: Nov 1, 1986
- Colonel: Dec 1, 1991
- Brigadier general: June 1, 1996

(CURRENT AS OF JULY 1997)
THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release
January 13, 1996

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO U.S. TROOPS
Aviano Air Base Aviano, Italy

6:20 A.M. (L)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Good morning. I know it's early, but we can do better than that. Good morning. (Laughter.)

Minister Corcione, Ambassador Bartholomew, our distinguished battalion hosts and guests, General Joulwan, General Ryan, Colonel Wald, Chief Myers, Colonel Moody, Aviano families, and to the men and women of Operation Decisive Edge. Let me begin by thanking the Colonel for that fine welcome, and thanking all of you for making me feel so welcome. I am very pleased finally to have a chance to come here to Aviano and to see you. And since it's so early, I may be more pleased to see you than you are to see me. But I'm glad you came out anyway.

I thank you for giving me the chance to meet you and to tell you how important and how appreciated your work is. What you and our allies are doing here and in Bosnia is the difference between a war that resumes and a peace that takes hold. You are giving people who have suffered so very much a chance to enjoy the blessings of a normal life. You are living up to the great traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States -- protecting our nation's interest by keeping a fire out that has threatened the heart of Europe's stability.

On behalf of all the American people, I come here most of all to thank you for the superb job you are doing on this historic mission. (Applause.)

As you did in Operation Deny Flight and Operation Deliberate Force, the 31st Fighter Wing and all of the units here at Aviano, including the Guard and the Reserve, are showing in Operation Decisive Edge the professionalism, the skill, and the dedication that make America's military the greatest on Earth, and make NATO a force for peace throughout Europe.

The American people know that the burden of America's leadership weighs heavily on you and on the families that are here. Many of you who are here have been a long way from home for a good long while. Others have just arrived. Because of the sacrifices you are making here and in the Balkans and the strength of the families that stand behind you, your country is able to stand up for its values and its interests.

I particularly want to thank Colonel Wald, who has done a tremendous job in commanding Aviano and the 31st Fighter Wing. America is proud of the way
this base has met the challenge of this operation. He told me just before we
came in here that he'd been here about six months, and the very first day he
was on the job was one of the days that our bombing campaign was underway.

Today, as a part of my visit here and in recognition of Colonel Wald's
fine performance and his outstanding career over 25 years in the United States
Air Force, I am pleased to promote him to Brigadier General. (Applause.)

Colonel, it sounds like if we were doing this by popular opinion, I
wouldn't stop there. (Laughter.)

I would like to ask Mrs. Wald and their daughter, Marissa, to come up and
stand with me. And I'd like to ask Mrs. Wald to help me as we put the stars on
the General's soldier. (Applause.)

General, our nation and I look forward to many more years of your
service. We thank you and congratulate you.

Let me say a special word of thanks to the Italian Defense Minister, Mr.
Corcione, the Italian government and the people of Italy for the hospitality
that all of them have shown our forces, and for their help in coordinating this
difficult operation. All of you know that all of our efforts over the last
several years to contain the conflict in Bosnia, to deliver humanitarian aid,
and in the end, to bring an end to it, would not have been possible without the
partnership of the Italian government and the Italian people. And the United
States is very grateful for it, and we thank you. (Applause.)

I also want to say a word of appreciation to all the other countries,
especially those of our NATO allies participating in Decisive Edge. I know
that distinguished units from Britain and Spain are here today; they, too, are
playing a vital part in keeping our alliance strong and making sure this
mission will succeed. And we thank them.

Men and women of Decisive Edge, let me say now, good luck and Godspeed.
You are heroes for peace. Our nation is very proud of you. And as long as you
live I hope you will always look back on this mission as something of historic
importance and fundamental human decency.

Thank you. God bless you, and God bless America. (Applause.)

END

6:30 A.M. (L)
Kale, Dora A.

From: LaFleur, Vinca S.
Sent: Friday, December 19, 1997 2:44 PM
To: @NSA - Natl Security Advisor
Cc: @PLANNING - Strat Plan & Comm; @DEFENSE - Defense Policy
Subject: One small change to Aviano Remarks [UNCLASSIFIED]

Importance: High

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aviano.doc

ROB, DIANA, ET AL: IF SRB/JS HAVE NOT ALREADY REVIEWED THE PREVIOUS DRAFT, COULD YOU PLEASE SUB THIS ONE? IT INCLUDES A NICE LINE BOB BELL SUGGESTED.

thanks -- vinca.

Vinca -
Treat Sel
confirm.

[Signature]
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
REMARKS TO TROOPS AND FAMILIES
AVIANO AFB
AVIANO, ITALY
DECEMBER 22, 1997

Acknowledgments: Prime Minister Prodi, General Pepe, General Clark [TK who else]

To the men and women of the 31st Fighter Wing -- the Triple Nickel... the “Buzzards” of the
510th Fighter Squadron... and the 603rd Air Control Squadron; to the “Panthers” of Marine
Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron Two; to all the families and civilian personnel; to our
Italian hosts and our British and Spanish allies: It’s great to be back in Aviano.

Two years ago, as some of you here may recall, I showed up at six in the morning. Despite the
hour, the dark and the cold, you made me feel very welcome. And today, I am honored to join
you again at a slightly more civilized hour – to share the spirit of the holiday season... and to
say, on behalf of your proud and grateful nation: Thank you for your service.

Our men and women in uniform, at Aviano and around the world, reflect the best of America.
You come from different hometowns, with different backgrounds and different dreams – but you
share a belief in America’s role as the world’s leading force for peace and freedom. And every
day, you put yourselves on the line to bring that role to life – defending our nation... deterring
aggressors... bringing hope to those in need.

I especially wanted to thank you today for your heroic efforts in Bosnia. You have been with us
every step of the way – from Deny Flight to Deliberate Force; Decisive Edge to Deliberate
Guard – keeping the battle out of the skies... driving the parties to the peace table... providing essential air cover for your colleagues on the ground. The names of the operations changed, but your dedication never wavered. And because of you, the war is over and the work of building peace is well under way.

As you know, I've just spent the day in Bosnia, where I saw the fruits of your labor. I saw children who could play outdoors without fear. I saw schools and hospitals and roads that had been repaired. I saw homes that were warm, stores that were open, families that were nourished and hopes that were alive. I saw a land that, because of you, will enjoy the blessings of peace in the new year. I hope you are proud of what you helped achieve. America is very proud of you.

I'm told that one of my favorite groups was performing here last week: The Miracles. Let me say this: When it comes to bringing peace to Bosnia, you have worked miracles.

Your mission of peace and goodwill in Bosnia reminds us what this season is all about. And at this time of year, we are especially aware of the sacrifices you make – leaving families, loved ones and the comforts of home behind; doing your duty so your fellow Americas can wake up on Christmas morning to a flourishing nation at peace.

I want to say a special word to the families here, some of whose loved ones may be far from home even as we meet. Last month, our bases all around the world celebrated Military Family Appreciation Week. But I know that your work to support your loved ones is a round-the-clock, full-time job. When we call on our troops to defend America's interests, we call on their...
families as well. And no ribbon or medal could ever convey the enormity of your service... the strength of your support... the depth of your commitment... or the size of your hearts.

I'd also like to thank Prime Minister Prodi and the Italian people for their hospitality... and for all they have done to help a new day of peace shine forth in Bosnia. To our Italian hosts, and to the British and Spanish servicemen who join us here today: The United States is proud to be your Allies, partners and friends.

And to all the men and women of the Aviano community: When I came to visit two years ago, you gave me a wonderful flight jacket. On the wing patch are three simple words that have guided the 31st Fighter Wing for 57 years. It says, Return With Honor. This Christmas, my wish for all of you – the aircrews... ground crews... air controllers... technicians... security police... nurses and doctors... and all who contribute to America’s strength in the skies – is that you always uphold that motto as well as you’re doing here in Aviano: That you complete every mission with skill and success and come back safely home.

Thank you for making our nation more secure and our world a better place. Happy holidays to you and your families. God bless you and God bless America.

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Blinken, Antony J.

From: LaFleur, Vinca S.
Sent: Friday, December 19, 1997 5:53 PM
To: LaFleur, Vinca S.; Blinken, Antony J.
Cc: @PLANNING - Strat Plan & Comm; @EXECSEC - Executive Secretary
Subject: RE: Aviano Remarks [UNCLASSIFIED]

One last thing: As of today's conference call, the list of bigwigs who would be there was unclear. Rob (the advance lead) promised the advance team would prepare a card with officials who need to be acknowledged. You should also double check which Senior Italian official has attended; the draft currently refers to Prodi on pages 1 and 3.

---Original Message---
From: LaFleur, Vinca S.
Sent: Friday, December 19, 1997 5:33 PM
To: Blinken, Antony J.
Cc: @PLANNING - Strat Plan & Comm; @NSA - Natl Security Advisor; @DEFENSE - Defense Policy
Subject: Aviano Remarks [UNCLASSIFIED]
Importance: High

Tony – the attached reflect Sandy’s changes, with one quasi-exception: He wondered whether the graf thanking the Italians, British and Spanish should be moved up to the top; I think no because (a) in my view, the first people the POTUS thanks should be our own; (b) the graf thanking our Allies is mostly about Bosnia, so in terms of the flow it should come after the Bosnia section; (c) the remarks are brief enough that I think the emphasis comes across at the end as well as it would at the beginning.

Good news as far as the flight jacket/patch goes: I called my parents, who took a magnifying glass to the 1995 photo of me and the POTUS en route from Aviano to Tuzla and confirmed that YES, the jacket did have the 31st FW patch on it when he received it. So no need to worry.

I’m not planning to come in tomorrow, but feel free to page me if you need me. Have a great trip!

Remember to:
(a) make sure advance has prepared card for official acknowledgments
(b) confirm Prodi's attendance — he's mentioned on pages 1 and 3.

Good luck!
Vince.

As e-mailed to Gov. 5:30 P.M. 12/19 — V.