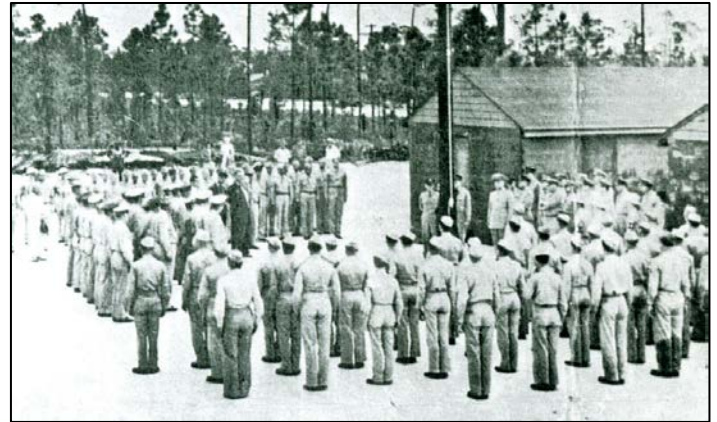


# History of Homestead Air Reserve Base

*Published April 04, 2018*

In the autumn of 1942, Lt. Col. William L. Plummer, with a handful of officers and enlisted men, made his way through the long pines and palmetto scrub of rural South Dade County to assume control of an isolated airstrip located about a mile inland from the shore of Biscayne Bay. The airstrip had been turned over to the government by Coconut Grove-based Pan American Ferries, Inc., which had carved it out of the rocky terrain in the early 1940s. Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Army Air Corps officials decided the site would better serve the country's defense needs as a maintenance stopover point for aircraft being ferried to the Caribbean and North Africa. In September, officers with the Caribbean Wing of the Air Transport Command sent Colonel Plummer to the site to begin construction of a fully operational military base. Homestead Army Air Field (HAAF) was officially activated on 16 September 1942<sup>1</sup>.



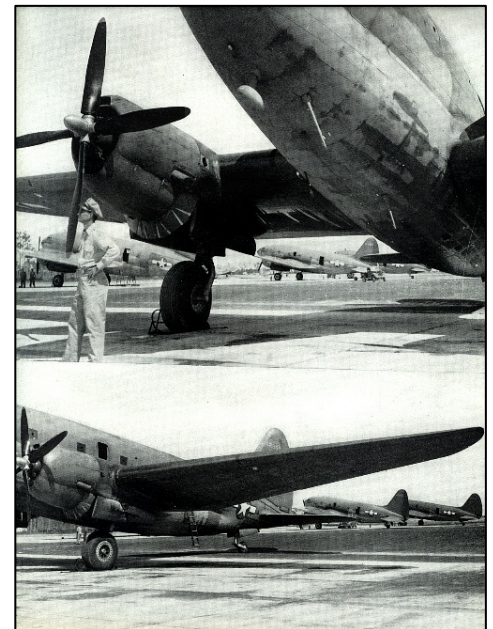
*Picture showing the new HAAF being dedicated on 21 October 1942 (Photo from the Florida Pioneer Museum)*

During its first six months of existence, the newly established Homestead Army Air Field (HAAF) served as a scheduled stop on a well-traveled air route from the northeastern United States. On Jan. 30, 1943, the base assumed a more vital role with the activation of the 2nd Operational Training Unit. The mission of the permanently assigned cadre of nine officers, 15 enlisted men, and 12 civilian flight instructors was to provide advanced training for aircrew members who would one day pilot C-54s, C-87s and C-46s along the 188,000 miles of Air Transport Command's globe-spanning routes.

During this period of time the base was under two commands. The runway itself, Homestead Army Air Field, belonged to the Caribbean Wing of Air Transport Command, while the 2nd Operational Training Unit fell under the War Department's Domestic Transportation Division. As the need for trained transport pilots grew during 1943, officials in Washington decided to enlarge the training program at Homestead. As a result, the entire base was transferred to Air Transport Command's Ferrying Division, and by the end of the year, the 2nd Operational Training Unit's sole mission was to prepare C-54 air crews to fly the famed "Hump" from Burma into China.

By 1945, Homestead Army Air Field represented the largest four-engine transport training operation in the entire Air Transport Command. The 2nd Operational Training Unit had graduated 2,250 C-54 pilots, 14,505 copilots, 224 navigators, 85 radio operators, and 1,375 flight engineers. But it all came to a rather abrupt end.

On Sept. 15, 1945, three years to the day after the base's founding, a massive hurricane roared ashore, sending winds of up to 145 miles per hour tearing through the Air Field's buildings. Enlisted housing facilities, the nurses'



*C-46s line the tarmac of HAAF in this photo from a HAAF Fact Book ca. 1943 (USAF Photo)*

dormitory, and the Base Exchange were all destroyed. The roof was ripped from what would later become building 741, the "Big Hangar". The base laundry and fire station were both declared total losses. The few remaining aircraft were tossed about like leaves.

Following an evaluation of the damage, officials announced on Oct. 25, 1945, that Homestead Army Air Field would be shut down, with a target date for complete closure of Dec. 1, 1945.

When the Air Force was created as a separate service on Sept. 18, 1947, the old Homestead Army Air Field lay in ruins.

The spirit of Homestead lived on, however, in the many alumni of Homestead's flight training courses who continued to serve. In June of 1948, when the Soviets began the total land blockade of Berlin, the Air Force responded with an unprecedented airlift effort known as Operation Vittles.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for 16 months, Air Force C-54 "Sky Masters", many of them piloted by Homestead graduates, were winging into and out of Berlin, keeping one of the world's great cities alive.



*A photo showing post 1945 after Hurricane Nine during a period when HAAF was shutdown. The airfield still saw an occasional transient such as this B-25. A closer look at the tower shows all windows blown out and the ground still has building debris spread about (USAF Photo Ca. 1945-1947)*



*Front Gate of HAFB 1950-60s (USAF Photo)*

In the early 1950s, as the Korean conflict was winding down, defense officials once again looked toward Homestead Army Air Field with an eye to making the site an integral part of our continental defense. In mid-1954, an advance party arrived at the old base to begin the clean-up effort, and on Feb. 8, 1955, the installation was reactivated as Homestead Air Force Base (HAFB). The base quickly became home for the 823rd Air Division, an umbrella organization encompassing the 379th and 19th Bomber Wings.

By the end of the decade, Homestead AFB housed more than 6,000 permanently assigned members, twice the size of its busiest World War II days, and a fleet of B-47 "Stratojet" bombers. In June



*B-47s line the HAFB tarmac in this 1950s postcard picture (USAF Photo)*

1960, the last B-47 left Homestead to make way for the mighty B-52 "Stratofortress" and the Strategic Air Command.

The year of 1962 brought two events that shaped the future of Homestead AFB. The 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, a tactical fighter unit with a proud history dating back to 1940, was moved from George AFB, Calif., to Homestead in response to the growing Communist threat from Cuba. In October 1962, it was discovered that the Soviet Union was placing medium-range missiles on the island, giving it an unprecedented offensive capability in the region, and intensifying the Homestead-based mission.

Troops and aircraft were rushed to Homestead AFB, swelling its population by tens of thousands. A tent city of more than 10,000 Army troops sprang up. The 31st TFW, in cooperation with two other tactical fighter wings assigned here for the duration of the crisis, had already identified targets in Cuba and were prepared to strike at a moment's notice. The world was on the brink of war, with Homestead on the leading edge.



An aircrew from the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing stationed at HAFB in 1962 pose for a picture in front of their B-52H "Homestead's Hesperides X" that broke a world record for distance in a closed course without landing or refueling (USAF Photo by Maj Gen (ret) Earl G. Peck)



President Kennedy arrives to HAFB on 26 Nov 1962 as the base continued to host units and aircraft deploying there for the Cuban Missile Crisis (US Navy Photo)



The President reviewing aircraft and crews at HAFB 26 Nov 1962 as the base went through a build-up during the Cuban Missile Crisis (Photo by Doug Mathews/Atterbury-Bakalar Air Museum)



A Photo of President Kennedy arriving at HAFB with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to recognize Air Force and Army units during the Cuban Missile Crisis 26 Nov 1962. The 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing (19 BW) hosted the base at that time (Photo by Doug Mathews/Atterbury- Bakalar Air Museum)



An army soldier salutes JFK as he passes by one of the deployed HAWK missile units at HAFB 26 Nov 1962. The HAWKS were deployed everywhere to beef up defense, even on the beaches at Key West. The base tower can be seen in background (US Navy Photo)

After several weeks of tension, the Soviets backed down. The missiles were removed. The crisis was over, but many of the changes to Homestead AFB spawned by the Soviet threat remained. Though still nominally a SAC base, Homestead AFB now maintained a dual mission: to stand ready to project air power around the globe, and to maintain an operationally ready tactical Air Force.

With the now permanent presence of the 31st TFW, the role of the Tactical Air Command at Homestead AFB increased rapidly throughout the 1960s. In late 1966, the 31st TFW F100s were deployed to Tuy Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. Two years later, on July 1, 1968, TAC officially took control of the installation, by activating the 4531st TFW as the host wing. In 1970, the 31st TFW returned from Southeast Asia and became the host unit.

In 1981 the 31st TFW and Homestead AFB again took on a new task: the training of F-4 aircrews. On March 31, 1981, the 31st TFW became the 31st Tactical Training Wing. Training was to remain the primary mission of the base until Oct.1985, when the first F-16 arrived. With the arrival of F-16s, the 31st TTW reverted to the designation of the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing.

During that period, the largest tenant unit on Homestead AFB was the 482nd Tactical Fighter Wing of the Air Force Reserve Command. The 482d TFW was the first Air Force Reserve unit to receive the F-4 Phantom fighter jet. In 1989, the 482nd TFW converted to the F-16s.



*An F-100 Super Sabre on the HAFB flight line in 1964 (Photo from the Florida Pioneer Museum)*



*An F-4 Phantom and F-16 Falcon are shown in the August 1992 photo in front of the tower a mere month before Hurricane Andrew struck the base. (USAF Photo)*

In the early morning hours of Aug. 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew roared ashore at Homestead AFB. The base was ground zero for the powerful, category 4 storm, (recently re-classified as a category 5 storm) which virtually destroyed the base.

On Sept 2, 1992, President George H. Bush and then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney visited the base. He was welcomed by committed airman now working out of the "Bolivar" Tent City. Most military and family members returned to the base only to gather what belongings had been spared while continuing a mass evacuation during this time to new duty assignments. A total of 23,500 additional military personnel from various military units across the United States operated out of tents on and off the base providing around-the-clock law enforcement, security, humanitarian, and rebuilding manpower for the base and community.

In initial rebuilding efforts, the DOD expended in excess of \$100 million in new construction and infrastructure improvements to preserve Homestead AFB as a strategic national defense asset. Demolition of unusable buildings and repair of base infrastructure ensued. Re-constructing the Florida National Guard hangar, air traffic control tower and maintenance hangers became priority. Within just few short years after the hurricane, base was in the process of building brand new facilities such as the wing headquarters, vehicle maintenance, communications, medical, and security facility buildings.



**Damage shown to hangars and aircraft after Hurricane Andrew 1992. The base reopened in March 1994 and was re-designated Homestead Air Reserve Station (HARS) on 1 Apr 1994. (USAF Photo)**



**The HAFB tower showing damage after Hurricane Andrew (Photo by Jon Kral, Miami Herald)**



**The old tower is being torn down to make way for a new one in this 1995 photo (USAF Photo)**

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An Air Force Ball was held on March 5, 1994. The Ball was a bittersweet affair. The event was a "Hail and Farewell" to "hail" the return of the 482nd FW from its post-Andrew relocation to MacDill AFB, Fla., and to welcome its new role as the predominant unit at the "new" Homestead

Air Reserve Station (HARS). But, it was also a time to bid "farewell" to the 31st TFW. The 31st TFW was deactivated at Homestead AFB and reactivated at Aviano AB, Italy.

Homestead Air Force Base was officially re-designated as Homestead Air Reserve Station (HARS) on 1 April, 1994<sup>2</sup>. The first test for the new station came in September 1994 when a multi-service group assembled at the base in preparation for an invasion of Haiti. The newly designated station continued to be a forward joint service operating location for events surrounding Operation Uphold Democracy (Sept 1994- Mar 1995) in Haiti as well as support for events such as the shooting down of two Brothers to the Rescue aircraft (Feb 1996) and the crash of Value Jet Flight 592 (May 1996) . These years also marked the beginning of another major role in the region as Homestead ARS became a forward supply stop for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The base was also a staging area for masses of Cuban immigrants receiving paroles into the United States.

In 1994, the 482nd Fighter Wing became the host unit. The wing then began rebuilding the station. Major construction projects ensued and Homestead ARS made it through another round of base closings in 1995. May of 1995 brought the grand opening of the BX Mart. Homestead ARS was selected by Congress to be the second site in the Air Force for the new concept of a combined commissary and exchange facility for smaller bases.

In February 1995, the station faced its next serious threat from the Base Realignment and Closure Committee, which sought to close the ravaged station. The civilian community, including state and federal government leaders, rallied in support of the station, and launched a fight for the station's survival and the return of fighter operations to South Florida. The BRAC ultimately withdrew Homestead ARS from the closure list on June 22, 1995. In the same year in Oct 1995, the station went through a Phase II Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI).

Deployments of the Wing's 93rd Fighter Squadron continued through the '90's in support of Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch, and various humanitarian missions continued to operate from the base. All the while, Homestead ARS continued to host training deployments and conferences involving the Army, Navy, British Air Force, the FBI, and the U.S. Forest Service. This high-operations tempo along with on-going post-hurricane construction, and strong, continued local community involvement seemed to cement the station's future in Homestead.

Upon their return to home station from Northern and Southern Watch Operations, the 93rd Fighter Squadron began performing Noble Eagle Air Defense alert missions, once again demonstrating the strategic importance of the Homestead ARS location as well as the incalculable value of its trained and ready combat force.

Through 2001, Homestead ARS units and personnel continued to fulfill their primary mission of training reservists while welcoming and supporting a number of other DOD and international tenant units. The base became a staging ground for numerous exercises and training conferences for Air Force Reserve Command, as well as various Joint Task Force and DOD functions.

In early March of 2003, as they prepared for yet another rotation to Operation Southern Watch, members of the 93rd Fighter Squadron advance party found themselves on the front lines for the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Two pilots and two F-16 aircraft from the unit contributed to the "shock and awe" campaign over Baghdad, as well as other Iraqi targets, during the first and continued waves of the coalition forces campaign.

Back at home, the resumption of the Operation Noble Eagle Air Defense alert mission added to the high-operations tempo the station faced that year. In total, the 482nd FW contributed more than 200 personnel mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, predominately from security forces, services, and civil engineering squadrons.

With the acquisition of the runway and associated land, Homestead Air Reserve Station (HARS) was officially re-designated and renamed Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) on 17 December 2003<sup>3</sup>.

Even with continuing mobilizations and other real world tasking, the 482nd FW received an outstanding rating on a Standardization/Evaluation Program inspection and satisfactory ratings on both a Unit Compliance Inspection in 2003 and an Operational Readiness Inspection in 2004. Additionally, the wing received numerous unit and individual Air Force Reserve Command and 10th Air Force awards during those two years, proving it could not only fulfill multiple missions and role tasking, but also continue to display excellence in every area.

Homestead ARB again appeared on the DoD Base Realignment and Closer Commission's (BRAC) list to close in 2005. The base received many visits through the year from government decision makers. The BRAC committee eventually decided to keep Homestead ARB (HARB) open and they redistributed nine more aircraft from other closing bases to HARB. Also in 2005, the base supported El Salvador during Operation New Horizon, providing combined engineer and medical readiness training in the form of humanitarian and civic assistance to the El Salvadoran people. In the same year, the 93rd FS deployed to Hill AFB, Utah for Operation Patriot Runway training and then deployed to Iraq again for OIF while the base went through several hurricanes itself and then supported relief operations and response for Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma affecting the region.

The 482d Security Forces deployed to Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan in 2006 while the Fighter Wing conducted an Operational Readiness Exercise on base and continued support for Hurricane damage restoration in the South Florida region.

In 2007, the 70th Aerial Port Squadron processed cargo through USAID and US SOUTCOM for a humanitarian mission in Bolivia while the base supported the Fort Lauderdale Air and Sea Show and deployed aircraft, pilots, maintainers, and civil engineers again to Balad AB and Sather AB, Iraq, in support of OIF, then finished off the year with the 482d Fighter Wing hosting the Heritage to Horizons Air Force Ball commemorating the Air Force's 60th Anniversary.

The base started 2008 performing an Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE), then deployed to Bulgaria for Operation Viper Javelin becoming the first AFRC unit to deploy to Bulgaria and fly against the MIG-21 and 29.

In November of 2009, Homestead ARB hosted its first Air Force sponsored air show in 18 years, featuring the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds as the headlining act. The air show was a complete success and marked the beginning of many more to come. In November of 2010, Homestead ARB hosted



***An F-16 departs Homestead Air Reserve Base in this 28 Jan 2008 photo (USAF Photo)***

another air show, featuring the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, with an estimated 400,000 spectators entering the gates of the base. Homestead ARB continued to host the well-attended “Wings Over Homestead “Air Show. The base hosted the air show again in 2012 and then the base welcomed another crowd for a 2016 show.

2010 was a busy year for Homestead ARB. Along with its geographically strategic U.S. defense operations location, the base is also used as a staging area for relief efforts in the southern hemisphere and serves as a major focal point in providing assistance in numerous natural disasters such as the Haiti Relief Efforts. Operation Unified Response was a month-long humanitarian effort to provide manpower, food and water and to assist earthquake victims reunite with relatives and loved ones after the devastating earthquake in Port Au Prince, Haiti. From Jan. 13, 2010 to Feb. 13, 2010, components of the Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, and Coast Guard staged troops, equipment, and thousands of pounds of supplies to be flown to Port Au Prince airport.

Reservists from the 482nd Civil Engineering and Security Forces Squadrons completed a six month deployment in June of 2010 to Kirkuk Regional Air Base in Northern Iraq. Their mission was to provide security and create a safe and secure environment for thousands of U.S., Coalition, and Iraqi troops; U.S. State Department Provisional Reconstruction Teams, and civilian contractors housed and operating from the base. Airmen from the 482nd Civil Engineering Squadron returned from their six month deployment at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, in Aug. of 2010. Their mission was to build roads and light infrastructure.

70th Aerial Port Squadron members from Homestead ARB set records for the most mail sent in a single day during their 2010 deployment to Bagram AB, Afghanistan, and Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan.

The year 2010 also saw the return of the 93rd Fighter Squadron to the Red Flag exercise after a 16 year absence. The last time Homestead ARB attended Red Flag was in 1994. The advanced aerial combat training exercise held at Nellis AFB, Nevada prepared Homestead ARB fighter pilots and maintainers for integrated joint operations in air-to-air and air-to-ground combat. At the end of the year, Homestead ARB aircraft, pilots, and maintainers put their honed skills to the test with a deployment to Kunsan AB, South Korea.



***A 482nd Fighter Wing's Civil Engineering Squadron Airman helps move American survivors of the Haiti earthquake into the Sam Johnson Fitness Center at Homestead ARB, Fla. (USAF Photo/ SrA Airman Lou Burton)***



***An F-16 "Mako" jet from Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. taxis onto the runway of Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada., to participate in Red Flag, 26 Jan 2010. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Tech. Sgt. Bucky Parrish)***



Also in 2010, the base saw the opening of a new Coffee Shop, 'Blazin Beans', a new hair care salon, as well as a new, and the last time, a Shoppette would open inside the historic existing Base Exchange location outside of the base cantonment area. These new service facilities highlighted big changes on the base as the 482d Mission Support Squadron (MSS) re-aligned in Dec 2010 as the new 482d Force Support Squadron (FSS).

As deployed Homestead ARB members returned home from deployments through 2011 and 2012, a new canopy erected over the Westover Gate welcoming members through the newly designated 'main gate'. The base saw the start of construction on the new Dining Facility, Fitness Center, as well as the new headquarters building for Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) while also seeing the completion of a new Class A burn facility for firefighter training. The base also kicked off a few years of Operational Readiness Exercises in preparation for an upcoming Air Combat Command (ACC) Operations Readiness Inspection (ORI) in 2012 as it commemorated the 20 year anniversary of Hurricane Andrew.

What also highlighted the year historically for the base in 2011, was the return of Active Duty to Homestead ARB and 482d Fighter Wing operations as the Air Force announced the Total Force Integration (TFI) initiative. Homestead ARB would be one of four bases to establish new active associate units. Homestead ARB initiated the association with the 482d Fighter Wing and active duty's Detachment 2 (Det 2), 20th Operations Group. The active duty Det 2 at Homestead ARB would later be re-aligned as Det 93, 495th Fighter Group (2013), then re-aligned in 2016 to the re-activated 367th Fighter Squadron (367 FS) at Homestead ARB. The base also saw historical significance as it was one of the few Air Force bases that participated in a technology upgrade test project for the Air Force in 2012 that would eventually see the Apple iPad replace paper Technical Orders in 2014.

The 482d Fighter Wing established the Development Training Flight (DTF) in 2012 giving new Homestead ARB recruits and the base an improved method to prepare new trainees for Basic Military Training (BMT, and the Technical School environment.

The 482d Fighter Wing sent aircraft and maintainers to Eglin AFB for the 2013 OPERATION COMBAT HAMMER. The event also known as the Weapons System Evaluation Program (WSEP) is a testing program the Air Force uses to validate munitions products and processes. Homestead ARB's participation in the event was historical in the fact it was the first time an active duty had deployed from AFRC. Active Duty Airmen of the 495th Fighter Group, Det 93, formerly known as the 20th Operations Group Det 2, joined their Homestead ARB citizen airmen peers in the making the event successful.

In 2013, the 482d Security Forces Squadron deployed members to Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan while base aircraft, pilots, and maintainers deployed to OPERATION GREEN FLAG, Barksdale AFB, LA, Naval Air Station Fallon, Nevada and also Hill AFB, Utah for battlefield combat and live fire training. On the base the same year, as the F-16s received major



*From 2001 and forward the tempo intensified greatly for Homestead ARB members training and deploying in support of contingency operations worldwide. In this January 2014 photo Airmen shake hands and say farewell to base leadership as they head out again to undisclosed locations (U.S. Air Force photo by/Tech. Sgt. Lionel Castellano)*

avionics upgrades and a new flight-simulator was installed, the base opened the new Troop Feeding Facility and Community Activities Center (CAC) and then broke ground for the new AAFES Express.

The extensive training in 2013 prepared base reservists and active duty airmen from operations and maintenance for worldwide deployments again in 2014. Base members would deploy at the beginning of 2014 and return later that year to the base as new flight-line shades were installed and the newly renovated fitness center opened in May 2014. Congressman Sam Johnson and Congresswomen Ileana Ros-Lehtinen were also at the base for the ribbon cutting ceremony for not only the fitness center, but for the new Community Activity Center and AAFES Express. A historical honor to reward the base for such a tempestuous deployment tempo, the City of Homestead proclaimed 3 Oct as the 482nd Fighter Wing day. The City of Homestead Mayor, Jeff Porter, presented the proclamation at a Military Affairs Committee Meet and Greet. Also in October, the base started the year long process of migrating to a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone line system.

In October 2014, The 482d Fighter Wing accomplished a successful “Effective” rating by the AFRC Inspector General during the Capstone Event ending what was a two year Unit Effectiveness Inspection (UEI) cycle and starting a new cycle under the new Air Force Inspection System and Commanders Inspection Program (CCIP).

In early 2015, the 482d Fighter Wing deployed aircraft, pilots, and maintainers to Tyndall AFB, FL for COMBAT ARCHER, a real-world air-to-air weapons system evaluation program that allowed 93rd Fighter Squadron (93 FS) and 495th Fighter Group, Det 93 pilots as well as maintainers and munitions specialists to hone their combat skills. The Tyndall pilots returned the favor within the month travelling to Homestead ARB with their F-22s and T-38s for a large force CHUMEX exercise.

The year 2015 brought several historic events unfold at Homestead ARB. Renovations that started in 2013 for survivor of Hurricane Andrew, Building 346 completed. Then, on 23 October 2015, Homestead ARB’s historic Total Force Integration (TFI) initiatives took center stage as the active duty 495th



*A possible sign of things to come for HARB, both F-16 and F-22 aircraft wait for clearance from the tower to take-off on 2 Mar 2015 during the CHUMEX at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jaimi L. Upthegrove)*



*Building 346 ca.1980-1990 then owned by the Navy (USAF Photo)*

Fighter Group, Det 93 took on the lineage of a decorated WWII Fighter Squadron, re-activating under the Vulture emblem and becoming the 367th Fighter Squadron (367 FS).

In 2016, the base went from an intensified surge mission exercise of launching a whopping 43 flying missions over the February Unit Training Assembly (UTA), to initiating the inaugural Honorary Commanders Program with the City of Homestead's Military Affairs Committee (MAC) on the March UTA. The new program established the opportunity for Honorary Commanders from the local community to shadow base commanders on the base allowing for a stronger relationship to be created.

In April 2016, the Air Force announced that Homestead ARB would be a candidate for the F-35 Lightning II amongst only four other reserve locations. Then, coincidentally, in May 2016, aircraft, pilots, and maintainers deployed to Hill AFB, Utah, the home of the F-35's main support facility, Ogden Air Logistics Complex, for AEF Deployment Spin-Up live-fire air combat training.

Also in early 2016, the base 482 Civil Engineering Squadron sent members to assist in repair and restoration at Fort Jefferson, a 19th century remote island military fortification, 70 miles west of Key West, in the Dry Tortugas National Park. Continuing progress made from duty at the fort in 2011, 2013, and 2014, Homestead ARB engineers returned to advance the ongoing maintenance cooperation project between Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) and the National Park Service. This is a project that Homestead ARB has participated in for many years and continues to send members to assist in the upkeep of the park.

The surge missions and live fire training were put to the test as 482 FW Operations and Maintenance airmen once again deployed to various European and Southwest Asian locations to include Ramstein AB, Germany, Al Udeid AB, Qatar as well as Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel and NATO Resolute Support missions in July and then returned to the base in November.

The base hosted a fifth "Wings Over Homestead" Open House and Air Show over the November 2016 UTA welcoming over one hundred thousand guests to the base.

In January 2017, the 482 Mission Support Group (MSG) deployed hundreds of Airmen from the base to several air bases in Kuwait for support of Operation Inherent Resolve. By the end of the year members from Force Support, Security Forces, Civil Engineering, Logistics Readiness,



***A 482 Fighter Wing F-16 Fighting Falcon, Mako jet, takes off on a mission at dawn from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan on 11 February 2014. (Photo taken by SMSgt Gary J. Rihn; 455 AEW/PA; USAF Photo)***

Communications, as well as Aerial Port Squadrons deployed and returned successfully from their Kuwaiti desert missions.

In February 2017, the 482 FW accomplished an “Effective” rating on the Capstone visit from the AFRC Inspector General culminating several years of continuous evaluation to validate and verify the wing’s Commander’s Inspection Program (CCIP). The Capstone event in Feb 2017 ended one successful inspection cycle for the wing and started the next.

While the Mission Support Group Airmen deployed to Kuwait, the Operations and Maintenance Groups deployed aircraft, pilots, and maintainers to Andravida AB, Greece to participate in the NATO Iniohos 17 exercise. Twelve F16s and crews from the base deployed to the large force, multi-national flying exercise held in March through April 2017.

Through history, Homestead ARB has and always will have to deal with hurricanes due to its location. What ended the year in 2017 and put Homestead ARB again at the forefront of historical humanitarian relief efforts was the hurricane season. As the hurricane stayed to the west. As wing members were both returning home from and deploying to Southwest Asia missions, base Hurricane Operations started as Hurricane Irma headed towards South Florida and the base prepared by evacuating F-16 aircraft and crews out to Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base. On Sept 10, 2017, Hurricane Irma went through the Florida Keys and then through the peninsula. The base only suffered minor damages. The 125th Detachment of the Florida Air National Guard at Homestead ARB lost most of its hangar roof, but resumed its air defense mission with its F-15



***A familiar sight seen most every year at HARB during hurricane season, a WC-130J Hurricane Hunter from the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron out of Keesler AFB, MS sits on the tarmac in front of the tower in this 27 Aug 2015 photo (USAF Photo by Staff Sgt. Jaimi Uptegrove)***



***A C-17 Globemaster III, from Joint Base Charleston, SC loads up at HARB in support of Hurricane Irma relief efforts on 13 Sept 2017 as the base became a hub once again for another humanitarian mission (USAF Photo by Tech. Sgt. Liliana Moreno)***

Strike Eagle fighters shortly after Irma passed. While HARB did not take a direct hit this time, once Hurricane Irma went through, the base became a massive hub of activity in hurricane relief efforts that continued as Hurricane Maria also struck some of the Caribbean islands and devastated Puerto Rico.

Homestead ARB has assisted and continues to engage the globe in a myriad of missions in the Global War on Terror with numerous individual and unit deployments to include: Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Noble Eagle Air Defense Alert, Viper Javelin, and Operation New Dawn, Operation Freedom Sentinel, and Operation Inherent Resolve.

Today, the 482nd FW, the host unit of Homestead ARB, continues to support contingency and training operations of U.S. Southern Command and a number of tenant units, including Headquarters Special

Operations Command South, the U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team, and an air and maritime unit of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. In addition, Homestead ARB is home to the most active NORAD alert site in the continental United States, operated by a detachment of F-15 fighter interceptors from the 125th FW of the Florida Air National Guard.

As we look toward the future, the 482nd FW continues to provide the Department of Defense with an efficient, cost-effective air reserve base on the rim of the Caribbean Basin. Its strategic presence at the southernmost tip of the continental United States provides an invaluable platform from which to launch its full range of capabilities. Poised to protect and defend, readiness is its primary mission. Whether responding to real-world contingencies and tasks in support of homeland defense or performing its on-going mission of training America's finest citizen Airmen, the 482nd FW is "Ready to Win", and consistently lives its vision of service before self, integrity first, and excellence in all we do.



***The flagship Mako Jet for the 482 FW stands proud on static display for the crowds at the Wings Over Homestead Air Show 6 Nov 2016 (USAF Photo)***

Information is current as of 4 April 2018

[482d Fighter Wing History Office (482 FW/HO) - SMSgt Robert H Clark]

<sup>1</sup> (U) General Order 6, HQ CARIBBEAN WING AIR TRANSPORT COMMAND, 16 Sept 1942

<sup>2</sup> (U) Special Order GA-3, AFREA/MI, 24 Nov 1995

<sup>3</sup> (U) Special Order GC-017, HQ AF/ILEP, 17 Dec 2003