

History of the 102nd Intelligence Wing

The 102nd Fighter Wing was born in the spring of 1921 as the 101st Observation Squadron, Massachusetts National Guard. By November of that year, the squadron was federally recognized.

The squadron secured its own training site on the land filled tidal flats at Jeffries Point, East Boston. This humble field, with its two cinder runways, would later be known as Logan International Airport.

In 1940, the 101st was inducted into federal service and was then moved from Logan Airport to Otis Field at Camp Edwards, Mass. During World War II the unit served under the Ninth Air Force as a reconnaissance unit. After serving in France, the squadron returned to the states in 1945 and was reactivated as a National Guard unit on July 29, 1946.

In 1950, the 102nd was recalled to active duty and assigned to the Air Defense Command. Remaining at home station, the Logan International Airport-based ANG unit stood runway alert throughout the Korean conflict.

When the Berlin wall was built in 1961, the 102nd Tactical Fighter Wing was alerted and by Nov. 1st, 26 of the wing's F-86H aircraft were on the ramp at Phalsbourg Air Base, France. The wing provided close air support to NATO's U.S. Seventh Army.

By August 1962, the wing was released from active duty and returned to Air National Guard control. In August of 1968, the 102nd left its Boston home of over 45 years and became a tenant unit at Otis Air Force Base.

The return to Otis for the 102nd was fitting indeed. The 101st Observation Squadron, forerunner of the 102d Fighter Interceptor Wing, was the original occupant of the Otis Field and was instrumental in its construction on the Camp Edwards property. The original intent of Otis Field was for utilization by National Guard aircraft.

The wing flew the F-84F Thunderstreak until June 1971, when a squadron of F-100D Supersabres was transferred directly from the conflict in Vietnam. After making the transition to the "Hun," a shift in Department of Defense military planning brought still more change to the 102nd and its mission.

Mach 2, F-106 Delta Darts arrived on the 102nd's parking ramp. On June 10, 1972, the unit officially became the 102nd Air Defense Wing. Upon completion of transition, the wing commenced an air defense alert commitment on a 24-hour, 365-days-a-year basis.

On April 25, 1975, 102nd pilots were scrambled to intercept two Soviet TU95 BEAR D aircraft, 240 nautical miles off the Long Island coastline. Intercepts since that time have included everything from aircraft off course, additional intercepts of Soviet BEAR D aircraft, and aircraft carrying illegal cargo.

The 102nd's conversion to the F-15 marked the first Air National Guard air defense unit to receive the Eagle. The 102nd Fighter Interceptor Wing was redesignated the 102nd Fighter Wing in April 1992.

Examples of the wing's ability to function worldwide include a 1992 deployment of eight pilots, five F-15 Eagles, and 48 maintenance and security personnel, who deployed for five days to Canadian Forces Base, Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada. Another is the humanitarian deployment of 50 personnel from the 102nd Civil Engineering Squadron under field conditions, to the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas in July 1993 to rebuild school buildings and municipal facilities damaged by Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

More recently, in the years 1991 through 1995 the wing deployed to Panama as part of "Coronet Nighthawk," a drug interdiction operation. From 1995-1998 the wing deployed to Iceland for 45 days of air defense duty. During 1998 Otis Guard members both trained for and performed real-world contingency assignments in Iceland, Canada, Korea, and Europe. In 1999 the wing participated in Operation Northern Watch when it deployed with its F-15 Eagle aircraft to Turkey to patrol and enforce the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel in northern Iraq. The wing again deployed more than 350 personnel to the Middle East and Europe in 2000 to participate in Operation Southern Watch.

On September 11th, 2001, the wing sprang into action just minutes after the terrorists attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. More than 600 wing members were mobilized for OPERATION Noble Eagle. The wing began flying around-the-clock combat air patrols missions immediately thereafter, and continued doing so until February 2002. Overall during 2001, wing aircraft flew 2,388 sorties compiling more than 3750 flying hours.

On April 6, 2008 the Fighter Wing was re-designated to an Intelligence Wing. The new intelligence group, designated a Digital Ground Station, will exploit and analyze information sent from Unmanned Aerial Vehicles circling the globe. The new unit will also provide direct, around-the-clock support to combat operations worldwide. An Air Operations Group support-ing command and control of long-range strikes and cyber operations was activated in October of 2008.