

Shaw's history: F-16 saga continues

By Master Sgt. Michael Gartland
20th Fighter Wing Historian

The men and women of Team Shaw have supported many operational aircraft and missions since the base opened its gates in 1941: flying training, fighter and fighter-bomber operations, reconnaissance, search and rescue, and forward air control.

The longest serving aircraft has been the RF-4C, exceeding 26 years of service at Shaw. However, the F-16 is approaching this milestone with more than 22 years on Shaw's flight line. Its mission has evolved and expanded through the years.

The first F-16s arrived at Shaw on March 26, 1982. These aircraft served primarily as trainers for pilots and

maintainers. A few months later, the first fighter squadron activated making the host 363rd Tactical Fighter Wing the only wing in the continental United States with fighter and reconnaissance missions. As the wing accepted F-16s, it began sending its RF-4Cs to Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas. The last RF-4C departed in 1989.

Throughout the 1980s, the wing trained pilots to employ tactics that maximize the F-16s air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities. Pilots and maintenance personnel participated in exercises at home and at many overseas locations. Shaw's F-16s have also been involved in several tests measuring weapons effectiveness and deployment capabilities.

The 1990s ushered in a new era of increased operations following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Two F-16 squadrons deployed to the Middle East from Shaw in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait to participate in Operations Desert Shield and Desert

Storm. Units continued deploying to the region to enforce no-fly zones over Iraq in support of Operations Southern Watch and Northern Watch until both ended in 2003, when Operation Iraqi Freedom began. Aircraft from Shaw were critical to the success of major combat operations during the phase of the campaign that removed Saddam Hussein's regime from power, with men and women from the wing deployed around the theater in support.

Shaw's Homeland Defense mission traces its roots to the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Since then, aircraft from the 20th Fighter Wing and Detachment 1, 158th FW have flown combat air patrols to defend America from attack.

Although the specific missions and aircraft flown in support of it have changed many times in Shaw's history, the underlying theme of service and the dedication of Team Shaw have remained constant.



Photo by Senior Airman Jeffrey Allen

An F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot from the 78th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Shaw AFB, S.C., takes off on a mission on Friday, April 23, 1999. The pilot is a reservist assigned to the 78th FS and deployed to Aviano Air Base, Italy, in support of NATO Operation Allied Force.

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Shaw member embraces Hispanic heritage

By Airman 1st Class Susan Penning
Staff writer

Hispanic Heritage month is celebrated this year from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

Although the observance is a time for those with Hispanic heritage to embrace their cultural background, one Shaw member encourages others to use the observance to educate themselves.

"Hispanic Heritage Month is not just for one particular race to celebrate," said Senior Airman Aubrey Pabon, 20th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron. "It's about accepting other cultures. We'd have less conflict if people realized other races aren't wrong, just different."

Airman Pabon's father's side of the family is Puerto Rican and Spanish. She said the Hispanic influence she grew up with has always inspired her.

"The struggles my grandparents experienced coming to America

make me very humble and appreciative of where I am and what I have. They were farmers in Puerto Rico who lived a very simple life."

She said knowing the history behind her family has created a sense of pride and inspired her to be the best she can.

"Latin people have a lot of zest for life and a lot of pride," she said.

"[Airman Pabon] tries to be positive at all times and set the right example," said Staff Sgt. Vince Jervier, 20th Comptroller Squadron.

Airman Pabon said one of the things she enjoys most about her heritage is her family's love for dancing. Her grandmother was a flamenco dancer in Spain and her father taught her to dance at a very young age.

"I started dancing at age two," she said.

Airman Pabon said she knows how to salsa, meringue, and do bachata dancing. She has also experimented with flamenco.

Dancing is just one thing Airman Pabon's family likes to do together. "We like to laugh, have fun and are very family-oriented," she said. "Making time for family is a top priority."

Airman Pabon said there are many Hispanic people who have had an impact on her life. One is her grandmother.

"She always inspired me to do better, to see the big picture," she said.

Airman Pabon said her father has also been a strong influence.

"He instilled in me a die-hard work ethic and kept me on the straight and narrow," she said.

Airman Pabon said dancing is one part of her heritage she continues, but cooking is another. She is currently trying her hand at Spanish cuisine.

Airman Pabon encourages all Shaw members to take advantage of the ethnic observances the base offers throughout the year.

Did you know?

■ 39 Hispanic-Americans have received the Medal of Honor since its creation in 1861.

■ In 1775, the United States adopted the Spanish dollar as the basic monetary system. One theory indicates the dollar sign was taken from the pillars of the Spanish Imperial Coat of Arms.

■ The oldest city under the U.S. flag is San Juan, Puerto Rico.

What is your name =
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Train still chugging after all these years

By 1st Lt. Suzanne Ovel
Media relations chief

History stops here often. It chugs to a halt about three times a week outside an elongated single-story building as Shaw's two 80-ton locomotive engines deliver Jet Petroleum-8 fuel to the Fuels Management Flight here. Shaw's rail operation, which has been active since 1941, is today almost an anomaly in the Air Force.

"We're one of the very few bases that have a locomotive," said Lt. Col. Michael McDaniel, 20th Logistics Readiness Squadron commander.

The rails brought military equipment and fuel onto Shaw through the 1970s, but today the locomotives, built in the 1950s, only lug fuel onto base usually 10 to 12 cars at a time.

Ms. Michele Hill, a conductor at Shaw for nine years, is part of the two-person operating team that serves as a liaison between the fuels flight and the commercial railroad, coordinating the timing and the amount of each delivery.

"We plan out what their needs are for fuel day-to-day," said Ms. Hill. When Ms. Hill and Mr. Tom Scher, an engineer, aren't delivering fuel, they handle maintenance and

daily, monthly and quarterly inspections on the trains. While these veteran engineers work to maintain Shaw's locomotives on a daily basis, the Department of Defense is looking at the trains' long-term future.

"The Defense Energy Supply Center is the single-fuel managing organization for DOD, and they're the ones who decide if we receive fuel via rail or train," said Col. McDaniel.

As more and more DOD-owned cars go out of service, DOD will need to decide which bases receive the remaining serviceable train cars and which move to truck operations.

In the meantime, Shaw is due to receive \$4 million to upgrade its rails, which Shaw owns from the base to the Cane-Savannah spur about six miles away.

Col. McDaniel said the base already spent \$1 million of this money to replace some of the rails and rail ties.

"There's a piece of rail out there that was stamped 'made in 1895'," said Col. McDaniel. "The rail's been replaced, but it's an indication of [the age of Shaw's rail tracks]."

While the base focuses on upgrading its historic railroad



Photo by 1st Lt. Suzanne Ovel

Ms. Michele Hill (above), train conductor, works with Mr. Thomas Scher, engineer, to operate locomotive engines towards empty rail cars before pulling them off base Sept. 23. Before moving the rail cars, the team checked the cars' air brake system. The system can only be lacking five pounds of air for the train to still be allowed to operate.

tracks, the train's operators focus on enjoying the job that lets them work rather independently out of doors.

Mr. Scher, who's worked on trains from their steam-engine days

to diesel-engine upgrades, counts his job as one of the most desirable occupations on base.

"It doesn't get any better than this."