Friday, January 19, 2024
National Naval Aviation Museum
Naval Air Station Pensacola, FL
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

ENTRANCE OF OFFICIAL PARTY

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS
   Eglin AFB Honor Guard

NATIONAL ANTHEM

INVOCATION
   Lieutenant Commander Jason Dillon
   Naval Aviation Schools Command, NAS Pensacola

NARRATOR
   Captain Laura Kane
   479th Student Squadron

OPENING REMARKS
   Colonel Patrick Dierig
   Commander, 479th Flying Training Group

GUEST SPEAKER
   Colonel Joseph Little
   Commander, Detachment 5
   Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center

PRESENTATION OF
   AERONAUTICAL ORDERS AND WINGS

AWARDS

AIR FORCE SONG

DEPARTURE OF OFFICIAL PARTY
OFFICIAL PARTY

COL PATRICK T. DIERIG
COMMANDER
479TH FLYING TRAINING GROUP

COLONEL JOSEPH O. LITTLE
COMMANDER
DETACHMENT 5, AIR FORCE OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION CENTER
Colonel Patrick T. Dierig

Colonel Patrick T. Dierig is Commander of the 479th Flying Training Group at Pensacola Naval Air Station, Fla. The Group includes four squadrons, 325 personnel and 45 T-6 Texan II and T-1A Jayhawk aircraft and trains over 300 Combat Systems Officers each year for the U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard. Additionally, the Group supports over 1,500 Air Force personnel in the Pensacola, Fla area.

Prior to assuming his current position, Col. Dierig was a senior program analyst at the Office of Secretary of Defense, Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation (CAPE), Global Shaping Division. Col. Dierig led Department of Defense-wide program review and developed program alternatives to address Secretary of Defense priorities. Col. Dierig was a national security fellow at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

Col. Dierig commissioned through officer training school in 2001, after graduating from Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio with a Bachelor of Liberal Arts degree. Col. Dierig is a master navigator and electronic warfare officer with more than 2,600 flight hours in the AC-130U and MC-130H. Col. Dierig has flown combat missions in Afghanistan and Iraq; as well as led mission planning cells for joint special operations in South America and Africa.
Colonel Joseph O. Little

Colonel Joseph Little is the Commander of Detachment 5, Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. He provides oversight for more than 144 unit-assigned personnel and operational control for more than 300 matrixed major command personnel located between Edwards AFB, Calif.; Hurlburt Field, Fla.; and Boeing Field, Wash. AFOTEC Detachment 5 currently plans and executes tests on 20 different bomber, command and control, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (manned and unmanned), mobility, Air Force Special Operations, rotary-wing, and training aircraft and systems that are on Office of the Secretary of Defense oversight with a collective acquisition value of more than $104 billion.

Colonel Little is an ROTC graduate from Norwich University. He has commanded at the Squadron level and held a variety of flying and staff jobs such as crew flight equipment flight commander, training flight commander, chief of weapons and tactics; wing weapons officer; wing executive officer, assistant director of operations; 36th Operations Support Squadron Director of Operations; Nuclear Planning Officer at U.S. Strategic Command; Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike Chief of Commander’s Actions Group; and Deputy Commander for the 753rd Test and Evaluation Group. He has served at every major B-52 base to include Barksdale AFB, La., Minot AFB, N.D., and Andersen AFB, Guam. Colonel Little is a graduate of Air Command and Staff College and Air War College.

Prior to this assignment, Colonel Little was the inspector General for the 53rd Wing at Eglin AFB, Fla. He was responsible for matters concerning wing readiness, and efficiency of three groups and 34 squadrons spread over 16 geographically separated units. He also oversees the inspection and evaluation system for the entire wing.

Colonel Little is a Master Weapons Systems Officer with more than 3,000 hours, including 560 combat hours, in the B-52. He has flown B-52 combat missions during Operations Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.
Squadron Commanders

**479 STUS**
Lt Col Humberto Centeno

**479 OSS**
Lt Col Todd Saksa

**455 FTS**
Lt Col Ryan Simpson

**451 FTS**
Lt Col Timothy Groff
Graduate Flight Commanders

479 STUS
Capt Christopher Maynard
Capt John Cyhaniuk
Capt Cory Siedler
Capt Kyle Buenaventura
Capt Aaron Hansen
Capt Garret Mack

455 FTS
Maj John Graves
Capt Mathew Cunningham
Capt Evan Pohler

451 FTS
Maj Richard Duarte
Capt Nathan Braun
Capt Joseph Scherer
Capt David Whitaker
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Lt Graig Angarella</td>
<td>Glocester, RI</td>
<td>C-130, NAV</td>
<td>Bradley ANG Base, CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>2d Lt Jaeyoon Cho</td>
<td>Dong-Hae, South Korea</td>
<td>C-130, NAV</td>
<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station, MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d Lt Patrick Gilligan</td>
<td>West Palm Beach, FL</td>
<td>B-52, WSO</td>
<td>Barksdale AFB, LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt Feng Hai</td>
<td>Colorado Springs, CO</td>
<td>B-52, WSO</td>
<td>Barksdale AFB, LA</td>
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2d Lt Nathanael Hughes
Hometown: Orange, TX  
Aircraft: B-52, WSO  
Assignment: Barksdale AFB, LA

2d Lt Thomas Marabillas
Hometown: Orlando, FL  
Aircraft: HC-130, SO  
Assignment: Gabreski ANG Base, NY

2d Lt Shaun Parcher
Hometown: Navarre, FL  
Aircraft: AC-130, CSO  
Assignment: Hurlburt Field, FL

2d Lt Michael Macknowski
Hometown: South Amboy, NJ  
Aircraft: B-52, WSO  
Assignment: Barksdale AFB, LA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor Type</th>
<th>Instructor Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enroute Navigation Instructor</td>
<td>Capt Clare Shippee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Protect Instructor</td>
<td>Capt Jose Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Navigation Instructor</td>
<td>Maj Richard Duarte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTD Sensor Operation Instructor</td>
<td>Capt John Gluszek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-96 Simulator Instructor (CSI)</td>
<td>Mr. Paul Panici</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-6 Simulator (CSI)</td>
<td>Mr. Michael Yager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 MTR WSO Instructor</td>
<td>Lt Col Michael Rafferty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 DT WSO Instructor</td>
<td>Lt Col Luke Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 DT SO Instructor</td>
<td>Capt Nathan Hallam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 DT NAV Instructor</td>
<td>Maj Richard Duarte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 Bomber Employment Instructor</td>
<td>Capt Jose Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 Visual Low Level Instructor</td>
<td>Lt Col Michael Rafferty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-1 Instructor Pilot</td>
<td>Mr. Terry Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-6 Instrument Instructor Pilot</td>
<td>1st Lt Hannah Michitsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-6 Navigation Instructor Pilot</td>
<td>Capt Evan Pohler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Duty Academic Instructor</td>
<td>Maj Jeffery Cockrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Academic Instructor (CAI)</td>
<td>Mr. Matthew Schelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Duty Intel Instructor</td>
<td>MSgt Michael Holben</td>
</tr>
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History of the 479th Flying Training Group

The 479th Flying Training Group (FTG) traces in lineage to World War II. In September 1943, Lt Col Leo Dusard was tasked with standing up a new fighter group. He began by selecting key personnel from the 329th Fighter Group (FG), and on October 15th the 479 FG was activated at Grand Central Air Terminal in California.

Following the reassignment of Lt Col Dusard, Lt Col Kyle Riddle took the reins of the 479 FG and quickly deployed the group to Europe. On April 16th 1944, 145 officers and 910 enlisted members deployed to Wattisham Royal Air Station near the village of Ipswich, England.

Only 11 days after arriving in Wattisham, the 479 FG participated in its first combat mission. Maj John H. Lowell led 34 P-38F Lightnings on a sweep over Holland and Belgium. On May 31st 1944, Capt Frank Keller of the 435th Fighter Squadron (FS) recorded the group’s first kill by destroying a Junkers Ju-88 Zerstorer on the ground near Humfeld, France. Then, on July 29th, Capt Arthur Jeffrey made history as the first pilot to shoot down a rocket-propelled aircraft, a Messerschmitt Me-163 Komet, over Germany. On Thanksgiving Day 1945, the 479 FG boarded the USS Enterprise to return home to the United States. Upon return, the 479 FG was deactivated on December 1st 1945 at Camp Kilmer.

After World War II, the 479 FG was activated and deactivated several times:
- December 1952, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, George AFB, California, North American P-51 Mustang.
- June 1953, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, North American F-86F Sabre
- June 1954, 479th Fighter-Bomber Group, F-100A Super Sabre
- October 1957, group deactivated
- 26 July 1991, 479th Fighter Group, Holloman AFB, New Mexico, AT-38 Talon
- November 1991, group deactivated
- November 1998, 479th Flying Training Group, Moody AFB, Georgia, AT-38C & T-6A Texan II
- 21 June 2007, group deactivated

Finally, on October 2nd, 2009, the 479 FTG was activated at NAS Pensacola, Florida, under the Command of Col Travis A. Willis. The unit’s mission is to train the Air Force’s next generation aviator, the Combat Systems Officer (CSO). The 479th uses the T-6A Texan II and the T-1A Jayhawk to this end.

* The group’s three fighter squadrons (434th, 435th, and 436th) aircraft didn’t have cowling colored markings like other Eight Air Force fighter groups. Rather, the 479th Lightnings were distinguished only by their colored tail rudders.
The Evolution of the Combat Systems Officer

Combat Systems Officers (CSO) can follow their roots back to the advent of multi-crew bi-planes in WWI. During this time, CSOs fulfilled multiple roles to include navigators, observers, ordinance delivery, and intelligence gatherers on enemy positions across Europe. For many years, their duties on aircraft were not well defined. It wasn’t until the historic “Southern Cross” flight across the Pacific Ocean in May of 1928 that the navigator’s mission really began to take form.

Fourteen years after the historic “Southern Cross” flight, the United States entered World War II. In many World War II aircraft, to include the mighty B-26 flown by our 451st Bomber Squadron (BS) and 455th BS, the cockpit was designed for two crew members. As was typical with these aircraft, one seat was assigned to the navigator. In addition to navigation duties, the navigator also had bombardier responsibilities. This led to the affectionate term “bombigator”, referring to this multi-purpose crew position.

After WWII, CSO aircrew duties were expanded to maximize U.S. Air Force aircraft combat capabilities. Vietnam-era aircraft and tactics paved the way for the three distinct aircrew roles CSOs perform today. These specialties include Weapon Systems Officer (specializing in weapons employment), Electronic Warfare Officer (expert in electromagnetic spectrum exploitation), and Panel Navigator (expert in aircraft positioning, time control, and orchestrating airdrop). Since their inception, these three separate aircrew specialties have sustained the U.S. Air Force’s air superiority around the world. From OPERATION DESERT STORM, to OPERATION ALLIED FORCE, to OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, to OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, CSOs have been the backbone of the US Military’s operational successes.

Today, the Combat Systems Officer title designates an aviator that is trained to perform duties either as an Electronic Warfare Officer, Weapon Systems Officer, or a Panel Navigator. And while the crew position’s duties and name may have transformed over the years, its fundamental role to the lasting success of the United States Air Force has not. The demand for CSOs will only continue to grow in the 21st century as our nation upholds its global commitments and remains postured to defend our interests around the world.

The Air Force Song
by Robert Crawford

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em now, Give 'em the gun! (Give 'em the gun!)

Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

For photos of today’s events… Find us on Facebook!
http://www.facebook.com/479FTG