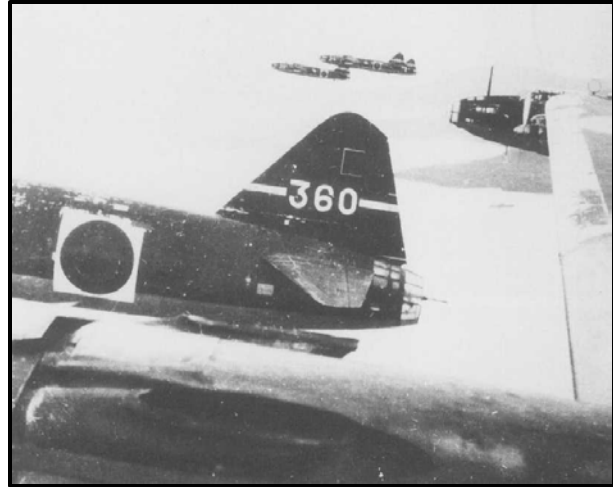




This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History July 2014



July 10, 1942: **Aircraft of the Misawa Naval Air Group deployed against Allied forces in the South Pacific at Saipan Island.** The Imperial Japanese Navy activated the Misawa Naval Air Group on February 10, 1942 and began the first operational use of the Misawa flight line. The Misawa Naval Air Group, also named the 705th Naval Air Group, served at Misawa Air Base until June 30, 1945.



Mitsubishi G4M1 -- called Bettys by U.S. Forces
-- of the 705th Naval Air Group in May 1943.

July 14, 1945: **Twelve U.S. Navy Grumman aircraft bombed Misawa Naval Air Base,** then under operation of the Japanese Imperial Navy. The flight of U.S. aircraft met no

resistance due to the lack of fighter aircraft on the base. The attack destroyed the Aircraft Maintenance shops and approximately 27 aircraft on the ground and was a prelude to an August attack on Misawa that destroyed 90 percent of base's facilities.

July 30, 1945: **Captain Lee Grosshuesch scored the 35th Fighter Wing's first and only "aerial victory" against a Japanese naval destroyer.** Grosshuesch led a flight of four P-51 Mustangs into a secluded harbor that, unbeknownst to the pilots, hid the Gotō-rettō Japanese Imperial Naval Base. Upon entering the harbor, the flight spied two destroyers steaming across the entrance. Unequipped with bombs, the flight strafed the destroyers. Grosshuesch aimed at the water



line of one ship and opened fire.

To his surprise, the destroyer exploded. In his words, "I had sunk the destroyer, but my poor P-51 was so riddled with shrapnel and debris from the explosion that it had to be scrapped. I don't know what happened to the other destroyer, but it must have been severely damaged by the huge explosion so close to it."





This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History July 2014



July 15, 1950: First Lieutenant **Robert A. Coffin** scored the 35th Fighter Wing's first aerial victory in a jet fighter when he shot down a Yak-9 in his F-80 Shooting Star. A change in mission made this the wing's second and final aerial victory of the Korean War. Major James W. Little had scored the 35th Fighter Wing's first aerial victory of the Korean War two weeks earlier in an F-82 Twin Mustang.



An F-84G Thunderjet of the 31st Strategic Fighter Wing takes off from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, during Operation Fox-Peter-One.

July 20, 1952: In **Operation Fox-Peter-One**, 57 F-84s of the 31st Strategic Fighter Wing deployed as three squadrons to Misawa Air Base. The deployment was the first mass movement of jet fighters across the Pacific and the first mass midair refueling movement for jet fighters. The 31st Strategic Fighter Wing's Fighter-Escort Squadrons departed Misawa on October 16, 1952.

July 15, 1957: The **Japan Air Self-Defense Force** established the **Northern Air Defense Force at Misawa Air Base** under the command of Major General Koichi Shimada.

July 1, 1958: **The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing began operations at Misawa Air Base.**

Misawa Air Base served as host to rotational fighter squadrons from 1950 to 1958 and to the 4th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (F-IS) from 1954 to 1965. With the arrival of a permanent operations wing in 1958, Misawa received two additional, permanent fighter squadrons, the 416th Fighter-Bomber Squadron (F-B) and the 531st Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS).

The activation of the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing signaled many changes at Misawa. The 6139th Air Base Group remained the base operating unit, but the personnel of the 21st Tactical Fighter Wing significantly increased the base population. In addition, the 416 F-B which operated F-84s and the 531 TFS



F-100Ds assigned to 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, Misawa Air Base.

which operated F-86s transitioned to the F-100 Super Sabre; the newer aircraft increased Misawa Air Base's ability to defend the air space of Northern Japan leading to regular intercepts of Soviet Tupolev Tu-16 Badger and Myasishchev M-4 Bison bombers. For more information, see [The Wingspread, July 5, 1958](#) and [The Wingspread, July 3, 1959](#).



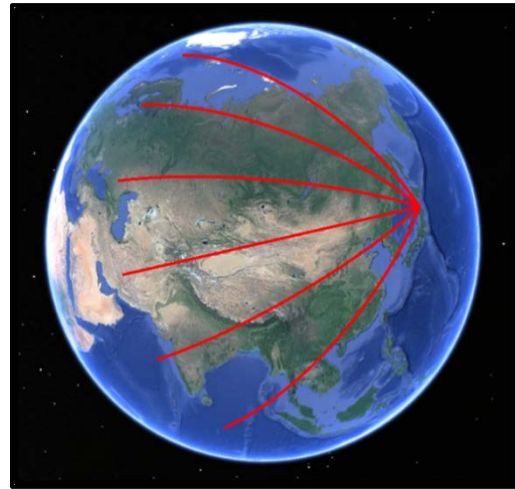
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July 14, 1959: **The last Republic F-84G Thunderjets** in the U.S. Air Force's inventory left Misawa Air Base bound for Tachikawa Air Base where they were scrapped. The 21st Tactical Fighter Wing's F-100 "Super Sabres" replaced the aging F-84s that had flown at Misawa since 1953. For more information see, [The Wingspread, July 17, 1959](#).



July 1, 1963: **The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers began construction of Misawa Air Base's AN/FLR-9 antenna** -- locally known as the elephant cage. A Japanese contractor, the Nishimatsu Construction Corporation, performed the actual construction with a projected cost, at the time, of \$3,325,000 million. Builders completed the project in March, 1965. The AN/FLR-9 antenna had the ability to directionally locate signals from up to 4,000 nautical miles. See [The Wingspread, November 22, 1963](#) and [The Wingspread, April 9, 1965](#).



July 1, 1971: **The U.S. Navy activated the Naval Security Group Activity (NSGA) Misawa** in a ceremony held in Hanger 941. Renamed Navy Information Operations Command (NIOC), the organization is the longest continually active U.S. unit on Misawa Air Base. For more information, see [Northern Light, July 9, 1971](#).



Photographs, top to bottom:

Republic F-84-G Thunderjets in flight over Tohoku.

The AN/FLR antenna array had a range of up to 4,000 nautical miles.

Known as the Elephant Cage, the AN/FLR antenna array was a landmark at Misawa Air Base. Photo circa 1980.

Colonel Edward H. Aune, Misawa Air Base Commander, and Mrs. Aune with Rear Admiral J.T. Burke, Commander, Naval Forces Japan, and Captain G.P. March, Commander, Naval Security Group Activity Misawa on July 1, 1971.



OPR: 35 FW/HO, 1 July 2014



This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History July 2014



July 1, 1971: The U.S. Air Force transferred responsibility for Misawa Air Base's air traffic control to the Japan Air Self-Defense Force. This was part of a greater realignment of functions that include the departure of Pacific Air Forces and the end to regular U.S. Air Force flight operations at Misawa Air Base in 1972. Pacific Air Forces returned to Misawa Air Base in 1978, and the U.S. Air Force resumed regular flight operations on July 1, 1984 with the activation of the 432d Tactical Fighter Wing.

July 1972: In 1972, the U.S. Air Force decided to end air operations from Misawa Air Base. The plan for withdrawal from Misawa transferred flight line operations to the U.S. Navy and base operations to the U.S. Air Force Security Service.

On July 1, 1972, **the U.S. Navy established Commander Fleet Air Western Pacific Detachment Misawa** to assume control of airfield operations and the air base's fuel farms. The initial detachment included a complement of four officers and twenty-seven enlisted personnel. The detachment continued operations for three years and was the immediate predecessor to Naval Air Facility Misawa.

Although the Pacific Air Forces ended tactical sorties from Misawa in 1972, the airbase remained important for the gathering of signals intelligence. Thus, the USAFSS assumed base operations in order to support the ongoing activities of "Security Hill." On July 1, 1972, the U.S. Air Force Security Service's 6920th Air Base Squadron assumed the base operating unit responsibilities for Misawa Air Base from Pacific Air Forces' 6122d Air Base Group. For more information, see [Northern Light, June 30, 1972](#) and [Northern Light, July 7, 1972](#).

July 25, 1980: Members of **VP-40 flew a life-saving mission with a P-3C** aircraft between Misawa and Yokota Air Bases after a typhoon prevented the timely response of the Air Force air evacuation system.



The 6920th Air Base Group assumes operation of Misawa Air Base.



Security Police color guard presents the Fifth Air Force colors prior to unveiling the Security Service banner.



This Month in 35th Fighter Wing and Misawa Air Base History July 2014



July 21, 1982: **Japanese contractors discovered a suspected World War II bomb** at the base of Misawa's FLR-9 antenna while performing maintenance work. U.S. Naval ordnance personnel declared the device to be non-explosive in nature and hauled it away for disposal.

July 1, 1985: The 432d Tactical Fighter Wing opened 316 new military family housing units in the north housing area.

July 10, 1989: The \$1.5 million **North Area Child Care Center** opened its doors for business.

July 29, 1991: Japanese construction workers discovered a **1,000 pound, unexploded U.S. M-65 bomb** from World War II during the excavation for the foundation of the new hospital facility. Security Force Airmen evacuated the area and redirected traffic until the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Airmen could identify and defuse the explosive device. U.S. Navy aircraft dropped the bomb on Misawa Air Base on either July 14 or August 8, 1945. See [Northern Light, August 2, 1991](#).



July 8, 1996: **The 13th Fighter Squadron (FS) deployed in support of Operation Southern Watch**; the Panther Pack was the first Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) F-16 unit to deploy in support of the operation. During the deployment, the squadron flew its first combat missions since the Mayaguez Incident in 1975. On August 31, the Iraqi military attacked the Kurdish city of Irbil in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688. The United States responded with Operation Desert Strike, a joint Navy - Air Force attack on the Iraqi air defense infrastructure. Following a cruise missile strike on surface-to-air missile sites and command and control nodes in southern Iraq, the 13th Fighter Squadron struck selected targets and destroyed an Iraqi SA-8 site and ROLAND radar missile system with HARM launches. For more information on the deployment, see [Northern Light, August 23, 1996](#) and [Northern Light, September 27, 1996](#).



July 24, 1998: **An F-16CJ of the 14th Fighter Squadron piloted by Lieutenant Brice Simpson crashed during take-off at Misawa Air Base.** Simpson ejected but landed in the flaming wreckage of the aircraft receiving serious burns. Medical officials transferred Simpson to Hachinohe Shimin Hospital following the crash; he died of his injuries on September 17 at Brooks Army Medical Center, Texas.