



pilots in the A-10, F-15 and F-16. The QF-4 is now included, and the F/A 22 will join in 2005. Previously the commanders' aircraft at Tyndall and Holloman were painted in a glossy 'Egypt One' type of colour scheme applied by DynaCorp at Holloman, but when in 2003 the lifetime of these image-enhancers were nearing their end a more ambitious plan was hatched.

The air force leadership, wishing the F-4 and its illustrious history to be more exposed and always supporting ways to honour the veterans, quickly endorsed the idea to have several Phantoms painted up with four different commemorative paint schemes, these depicting the different periods of the aircraft's career.

Six aircraft with relatively low hours (all QF-4Fs) were selected and flown to the Air Force paint shop at Randolph AFB. There the original paint of the aircraft was sandblasted away down to bare metal and the four different paint schemes were applied, but not before these schemes were properly researched by a team led by MSgt Thomas Niznik at Tyndall. The four main camouflage schemes have been applied, the oldest being 'South-East Asia' to represent the Phantom in the 1960s. In the 1970s this scheme was followed by the 'South-East Asia wrap around' camouflage. In the 1980s, most Phantoms were painted in the so-called 'Europe One' camouflage, two colours of green combining with dark charcoal grey. The final paint scheme is the two tone grey 'Egypt One'. Tyndall AFB received four of the six 'specials', while Det 1 received two. The 'South-East Asia' and 'South-East Asia wrap around' aircraft are duplicated, meaning both Tyndall and Holloman have one of each. The two Det 1 heritage aircraft also wear a fin band in the traditional black and white checkers adopted by the 82nd Tactical Fighter Squadron in World War II.

*Few aircraft have stirred the imagination in the same way as the legendary Phantom. Thanks to the highly experienced and dedicated personnel of the 82nd ATRS, and the increasing requirement for aerial targets, the F-4 continues to play a role in shaping the nature of aerial warfare.*

Flying fast-jets and warbirds together in a mixed formation needs to be rehearsed and in March 2005, Davis-Monthan AFB once more hosted Air Combat Command's Heritage Flight Conference. This is an annual event where the east and west coast Air Force demonstration teams, plus the Air Force-sanctioned group of warbird pilots, get checked out. It can be seen as a rehearsal before the airshow season starts.

Both the commander of the 82nd ATRS, Lt Col Kerby, and Lt Col Hainline of Det 1 are official members of the Heritage Flight, qualifying them to fly in and/or lead formations of up to

four aircraft. As a fine example, Lieutenant Colonel Hainline flew together with a P-38, F-15 and A-10 at the Holloman Air Show in April 2005.

With the Heritage Phantoms having captured the public imagination, the amount of requests for their appearance is simply overwhelming. Consequently, the Air Force leadership has already expressed its support to continue keeping aircraft painted up for this purpose. It won't be forever, but the future of the Phantom for the coming years is looking very bright indeed.

*Marnix Sap/MIAS*

