

## 496<sup>th</sup> TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON



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MODIFIED VERSION BY:  
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### MISSION

### LINEAGE

301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Light) constituted, 13 Jan 1942  
Activated, 10 Feb 1942  
Redesignated 301<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Dive), 27 Jul 1942  
Redesignated 496<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 10 Aug 1943  
Disbanded, 1 Apr 1944  
Reconstituted and redesignated 496<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron (All-Weather), 16 May 1949  
Activated in the reserve, 1 Jun 1949  
Resigned 496<sup>th</sup> Fighter All-Weather Squadron, 1 Mar 1950  
Ordered to active service, 1 Jun 1951  
Inactivated, 2 Jun 1951  
Redesignated 496<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 11 Feb 1953  
Activated, 20 Mar 1953  
Redesignated 496<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron  
Inactivated 1991

### STATIONS

Savannah AB, GA, 10 Feb 1942  
Drew Field, FL, 8 Feb 1943  
Harding Field, LA, 4 Oct 1943

Hammond AAFld, LA, c. 9 Nov 1943  
Abilene AAFld, TX, 11 Feb-1 Apr 1944  
Mitchel AFB, NY, 1 Jun 1949  
McGuire AFB, NJ, 10 Oct 1949-2 Jun 1951  
Hamilton AFB, CA, 20 Mar 1953  
Landstuhl AB, Germany, 4 Jul 1954  
Hahn AB, Germany, 8 Nov 1956

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

84<sup>th</sup> Bombardment (later Fighter Bomber) Group, 10 Feb 1942-1 Apr 1944  
84<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 1 Jun 1949-2 Jun 1951  
566<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Group, 20 Mar 1953  
Twelfth Air Force (attached to 86<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing), 1 Jul 1954  
7486<sup>th</sup> Air Defense (later Air Base) Group, 2 Dec 1954  
86<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Group, 3 Jan 1956  
86<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Wing, 8 Mar 1958  
86<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 18 Nov 1960

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

V-72, 1942  
A-24A  
A-24, 1942-1943  
P-39, 1943  
P-47, 1943-1944  
F-51D, 1953  
F-86D, 1953-1960  
F-102A, 1959 **1960**  
F-4E, 1970  
F-16C  
F-16D  
P-39Q  
A-24B  
P-47D  
P-47C

### **COMMANDERS**

#### **HONORS**

##### **Service Streamers**

None

##### **Campaign Streamers**

None

## Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

## Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

31 Oct 1955-31 Oct 1958

## EMBLEM



On an Air Force blue disc bordered white, fimbriated Air Force blue, an Air Force golden yellow increscent moon in sinister surmounted by an Air Force golden yellow gauntleted hand fesswise couped, the hand clenched and grasping the jesses of a white falcon in profile perched on the wrist, hooded, jessed and varvelled red, an Air Force golden yellow plume atop the falcon's

hood; radiating from the hand to dexter three Air Force golden yellow lightning flashes edged red; outlines and details black throughout. Motto on a scroll edged and inscribed Air Force blue, (Approved, 2 Sep 1960.)

### **MOTTO**

NULLI SECUNDUS--Second to None

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

496 fighter interceptor squadron f-102 aircraft crashed near buch, germany on 16 feb 67, but pilot safely ejected; 1967

Also during 1968, the 496th Fighter Interceptor Squadron was officially assigned to the 50th TFW under a reorganization that officially dissolved the 86th Air Division -- the 496th's former parent unit. In 1970, the 496th exchanged its F-102 aircraft for F-4E aircraft and was redesignated as a Tactical Fighter Squadron while retaining its Air Defense mission.

Following the re-assignment of the 81st TFS to Zweibrucken in 1971 as the first 'Wild Weasel' squadron in USAFE, the 50th TFW was left with the 10th TFS and the 496th TFS under its command. The 496th was a specialist air defence outfit which only in the previous year, 1970, had relinquished its F-102 Delta Dagger interceptors and been redesignated as a tactical fighter squadron rather than a fighter interceptor squadron. Its new equipment was the F-4E Phantom and although transformed therewith into the 496th TFS from the 496th FIS, the squadron retained its primary air defence mission. The Wing's other squadron, the 10th TFS, flew the F-4D version of the Phantom, and had been so equipped since the mid-1960s. The present shape of the 50th TFW materialised during 1976 as part of the Phantom re-shuffle in USAFE occasioned by the lead-in to the re-equipment of the 36th TFW at Bitburg with the F-15 Eagle. Instead of withdrawing the Bitburg F-4Es from Europe, USAFE distributed the aircraft to other wings and bases thus significantly upgrading the overall strength of the Command and permitting both the formation of new squadrons and the replacement of earlier Phantom variants by the F-4E. At Hahn these developments resulted in the re-activation of the 313th TFS to operate a newly available squadron of F-4Es, and the issue of F-4Es to the 10th TFS in place of their F-4Ds.

By the beginning of 1977, then, the 50th TFW was a three-squadron Wing, solely equipped with the F-4E Phantom. The presence of an improved interceptor capability at Bitburg in the form of the F-15 Eagle-equipped 36th TFW allowed USAFE to stand down the 496th TFS from its primary air defence duties so that the 50th TFW is now dedicated entirely to a tactical aviation mission. The roles of the Hahn squadrons today encompass tasks such as counter-air attack, interdiction, close air support, and interception, and the Wing maintains a capability to deliver all types of tactical weapons systems which would be needed to undertake its mission. Within USAFE, the 50th TFW forms part of the 17th Air Force, headquartered at Sembach AB, Germany,

but in common with the other NATO-assigned forces of the 17th AF, command of the Wing, would be transferred to the Alliance's Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force at a time of crisis, and once a certain state of alert has been reached.

November 25, 1968 As part of U. S. Air Forces in Europe reorganization, the 496<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron was reassigned to the 50th Tactical Fighter Wing.

ca. December 1985 The 496th Tactical Fighter Squadron, while deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, established a new U.S. Air Forces in Europe sortie surge record, flying 144 sorties in less than 12 hours.

496th F-I Squadron: activated 20 Mar 53 at Hamilton AFB. CA, assigned to the 566th AD Group and flying V-511 acft: converted to F-86D acft by Dec 53; transferred to USAFF and moved to Hahn AB, Germany on 31 May 5,1.

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496th Fighter Interceptor Squadron exchanged their worn and weary F-86D Sabres for supersonic F-102s during the Fall of 1959. While squadron personnel underwent F-102 transition training, the runway at Hahn Air Base, Germany, was closed for reconstruction work (lasting until December 1959).

On 9 December 1959, two F-102As (53-1809, 54-1402) and two TF-102As (55-4059,56-2329) landed at Hahn. These were the first of twenty-six aircraft slated for the squadron. The first F-102 landing at Hahn was made by MAJ Francis Lawson, the squadron operations officer. While aircraft were still being delivered from France, the squadron deployed a number of aircraft to Wheelus AB for weapons training on 18 January 1960. The unit deployed small groups of Daggers until 10 March 1960.

Twenty-one F-102As again deployed to Wheelus Air Base for weapons training from 2 Aug until 22 Aug 1960 and all aircraft except one successfully checked out with the WSEM. During this period, live missile firings were conducted and sixty-five percent of the squadron aircraft were qualified.

Between March and July of 1960, the squadron's aircraft were all involved in a local modification program conducted at Hahn. The radar equipment was brought up to the FIG-6 configuration by technicians from the FIAT Aircraft Corp., of Torino, Italy. On 8 December 1960 the squadron's aircraft started the FIG-7 modification program.

During 1960, the squadron requested a new unit insignia, since it was felt that the old insignia represented the F-86D. The new insignia, a gauntleted hand with a White Falcon, was officially

approved on 2 September 1960. During 1964, the insignia was slightly changed, with the color of the Falcon being changed to Brown (this change was not officially approved).

During 1961 and 1962, several F-102s from other units were temporarily assigned to the squadron while a number of their aircraft underwent modification by field technicians. The runway at Hahn AB was resurfaced during 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1963 which resulted in deploying aircraft to Ramstein Air Base and/or Bitburg Air Base for several weeks each time.

During 1964 the squadron made several deployments to other German airfields and to Torrejon Air Base, Spain. The winter weather in Central Europe was usually bad with low ceilings, fog and snow. Torrejon allowed a good alternative for flight training and the first deployment was made from 28 November 1964 until 30 January 1965. An average of six aircraft were usually deployed to Spain. During these deployments both pilots and aircraft were rotated between Hahn and Torrejon. These deployments were very successful because all the squadron's "low time pilots" were able to build up flying time. Additionally, a number of low level intercepts, both over water and over land were successfully conducted.

From 6 March until 24 June 1964, the 496th FIS received twenty-three newer aircraft, twenty of which came from the 497th FIS. This trade was requested by the commander of the 86th AD. The older F-102s were returned to the U.S. under Operation KRAZY KAT.

The 496th also deployed flights of aircraft to the south of Germany for exercise purposes. Erding Air Base hosted F-102As from Hahn AB for the first time during July of 1966, while another deployment took place during 1966 (October). There were three exercise deployments during 1967 (March, July and October/November). During 1968, there were two such exercises (February and April) and lastly during 1969 the squadron went to Erding during February/March.

On 19 Aug 1966, the squadron registered a first when the first field arrested landing was made using the field arrester hook on the F-102. With no margin for error, a relatively new pilot (ninety-five F-102 hours), LT Frank Furr, made a successful arrestment after a tire blew on takeoff. He circled and prepared for the landing while the base fire department sprayed down a coating of foam on the runway, minimizing the possibility of sparks and a fire.

The 496th FIS shared the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award given to the 86th Air Division for the period 1 July 1964 to 30 June 1965.

During 1968, the 496th won the Huddleston Trophy (together with JG-74 of the West German Air Force) for the 1968 AFCENT Air Defense Competition. It represented Sector 3, which won the first place sector award.

During early May of 1960, the sunburst tail markings were introduced on F-102 54-1405, which was also painted with commander's special markings consisting of a Black and Yellow band

around the nose section. During 1961 the squadron added two F-102 silhouettes on the port side of the nose which were retained up to the Spring of 1964.

During July of 1964, the 496th became the first unit in the 86th AD to introduce the colored band on the fin in Yellow (the squadron color). Additionally, the 496th was the only unit to add stars on the tail band. The insignias of both the 496th and the 86th were added to the band and the braking parachute housing was painted in Black and Yellow.

During November of 1966, the first camouflaged aircraft were taken on strength. The first aircraft was TF-102A (54-1366) which was delivered on 8 November 1965. The last squadron aircraft to be repainted was F-102A 56-1384 on 7 March 1968.

The unit was unfortunate in that it had the highest number of F-102s lost (six) and damaged (five) in USAFE.

On 20 July 1960, F-102A 53-1818 crashed some twenty-five miles from Ramstein AB, Germany, after a severe compressor stall. The pilot successfully ejected. On 22 August 1960, F-102A 54-1378 crashed in France on its return flight from Wheelus AB. The pilot had reported control problems but remained with his aircraft. He was fatally injured in the crash.

On 22 November 1961, F-102A 54-1375 was damaged beyond repair by a fire in the rear section. A fourth F-102A (54-1404) crashed on 24 January 1964 about fifty miles from Hahn AB. During a practice intercept at 35,000 feet, the aircraft flamed out and the pilot was unable to obtain a relight.

On 17 May 1966, aircraft 56-1090 crashed five miles SE of Pforzheim, Germany.

On 16 February 1967, F-102A 56-1045 crashed nine miles Northeast of Hahn AB. It was on final approach to Hahn with intermittent radio difficulties. The pilot elected to make a formation GCA recovery with his flight leader. The gear was lowered and the speed brakes extended when the aircraft began a gentle but uncontrollable roll to the left. With less than 1,000 feet remaining, the pilot successfully ejected. The aircraft was replaced by one sent over from the U.S. (56-1384).

On 11 February 1961, aircraft 54-1399 was involved in an accident at Ramstein AB. The aircraft was given temporary repairs and was then flown to Chateauroux Air Base, France, for additional repairs. The aircraft did not return to the unit until 2 June 1962.

On 3 March 1964, F-102A 53-1810 was scrambled on an early morning mission. Due to fog at Hahn AB, the flight was diverted to Bitburg after the mission, where the weather was at minimums. The pilot was unable to extend the nose wheel and he was advised to make an approach end BAK-9 barrier engagement. The landing cracked the fuselage at the forward electronics compartment. It was repaired at Bitburg AB by a team sent in from the San Antonio AMA and returned to the U.S. on 1 June 1964.

On 15 July 1964, 56-1121 landed at Hahn AB with damage after a mid-air collision with a West German Air Force Dornier Do-27B. In the mid-air, the Delta Dagger struck the light aircraft, cutting off a large part of the Do-27's right wing. The Dornier crashed, killing both crew members.

F-102A 56-1099 made an emergency landing at Stuttgart Airport, Germany, on 29 Aug 1968 and was repaired a month later. This aircraft had suffered electrical problems while on a mission and the pilot declared an emergency to the civil tower. He was cleared to land and made a steep final approach. He had excessive approach speed and performed an "S" turn in an attempt to lose both altitude and airspeed. The aircraft touched down 2,100 feet from the approach end of the runway at 170 knots. After approximately 100 feet, both main wheels locked and the tires blew. The aircraft finally ran off the runway at the 7,500 foot marker and came to rest twenty feet off the right side of the runway.

The last Squadron mishap occurred at Hahn on 1 August 1969 and involved aircraft 56-1053.

From October until December 1969 the squadron sent several F-102 pilots for F-4E Phantom training in the U.S. in preparation for unit conversion to the Phantom. On 1 January 1970, the 496th was redesignated a Tactical Fighter Squadron. After a ten year stay as Hahn's guardians, the twenty-two F-102s departed Hahn.

The F-102As were flown by ANG pilots of the 194th FIS, California Air National Guard, and the squadron which received the aircraft. One aircraft (56-1121) had the ANG insignia applied to the fin before it left Hahn AB. The squadron's two TF-102As were flown to the U.S. by regular Air Force pilots. The first F-4E Phantoms landed at Hahn on 10 February 1970, ending the F-102 era.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

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