

34th FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

The 34th Fighter Squadron is one of three fighter squadrons assigned to the 388th Fighter Wing at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The unit operates Low Altitude Navigation and Targeting Infrared for Night, or LANTIRN, F-16s. As part of the world's largest LANTIRN F-16 wing, the 34th Fighter Squadron conducts flying operations to maintain combat readiness of an 18-aircraft F-16C LANTIRN squadron. It prepares to deploy worldwide to conduct air-to-air and air-to-ground operations for daylight and nighttime missions. Approximately 50 personnel are assigned to the squadron. Equipment includes 18 LANTIRN-capable F-16s, worth about \$21 million each.

LINEAGE

34th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine constituted 5 Oct 1944

Activated, 15 Oct 1944

Inactivated, 15 Oct 1946

Redesignated 34th Fighter Day Squadron, 26 Aug 1954

Activated, 11 Nov 1954

Redesignated 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1958

Inactivated, 15 Mar 1959

Activated, 2 May 1966

Organized 15 May 1966

Redesignated 34th Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1991

STATIONS

Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 15 Oct 1944

Bluethenthal Field, NC, 9 Nov 1944–7 Apr 1945

Ie Shima, 19 May 1945

Kadena AB, Okinawa, 17 Oct 1945
Yontan AB, Okinawa, 29 Jan–15 Oct 1946
George AFB, CA, 11 Nov 1954–15 Mar 1959
Korat RTAFB, Thailand, 15 May 1966–23 Dec 1975 (operated from Takhli RTAFB, Thailand,
1–27 Feb 1969)
Hill AFB, UT, 23 Dec 1975

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Shaw AFB, SC, 6 Jun–13 Jul 1956
Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, 17–22 Jun 1957
Luke AFB, AZ, 13–26 Jul 1958

ASSIGNMENTS

413th Fighter Group, 15 Oct 1944–15 Oct 1946
413th Fighter-Day Group, 11 Nov 1954
413th Fighter-Day (later, 413th Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Oct 1957–15 Mar 1959
Pacific Air Forces, 2 May 1966
41st Air Division, 15 May 1966
347th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Jan 1968
388th Tactical Fighter (later, 388th Fighter) Wing, 15 Mar 1971
388th Operations Group, 1 Dec 1991

ATTACHMENTS

Ninth Air Force, 6 Jun–13 Jul 1956
388th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 May 1966–14 Mar 1971

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47, 1944
P-47D
P-47N
F-86H, 1954–1956
F-100, 1956
F-100D
F-100F
F-105, 1966
F-105D
F-4, 1969–1974, 1974–1975, 1976–1979
F-4E
F-16, 1979
F-16C
F-16D
F-35

COMMANDERS

LTC Richard D. Creighton, #1955

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

Eastern Mandates

Western Pacific

Ryukyus

China Offensive

Vietnam

Vietnam Air

Vietnam Air Offensive

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III

Vietnam Air/Ground

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV

TET 69/Counteroffensive

Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969

Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970

Sanctuary Counteroffensive

Southwest Monsoon

Commando Hunt V

Commando Hunt VI

Commando Hunt VII

Vietnam Ceasefire

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation

Southeast Asia 10 Mar –1 May 1967

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

29–30 Jun 1966

1 Jul 1966–30 Jun 1967

1 Jul 1967–30 Jun 1968

1 Jul 1968–15 Sep 1969

15 Mar–20 May 1971
18 Dec 1972–15 Aug 1973
15 Oct 1974–12 May 1975
13–15 May 1975

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

12 May 1963–21 Mar 1964
1 Apr–30 Jun 1965
4 May 1965–8 Jun 1965
15 Apr 1969–15 Mar 1971
1 Jul 1972–31 Dec 1973
1 Apr 1977–31 Mar 1978
1 Jun 1986–31 May 1988
21 Feb 1996–20 Aug 1997
1 Oct 2003–30 Sep 2005

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

15 May 1966–28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



34th Fighter-Day Squadron



34th Tactical Fighter Squadron emblems



34th Tactical Fighter Squadron



34th Fighter Squadron emblem: On a Black disc, border Red, a jagged, Red lightning flash across chief, surmounted by a White ram's head caboshed, eyes and nostrils Red, snorting a cloud of White vapor from each nostril, and having a ring in the nose in the shape of the ace of spades, with two, Red chain segments affixed thereto. (Approved, 9 Nov 1945)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Rams

OPERATIONS

Combat in Western Pacific, 20 May–14 Aug 1945. The 34th FS was activated at Seymour Johnson Field, N.C., Oct. 15, 1944, flying the P-47. The squadron served in the final stages of World War II, seeing combat operations in the Western Pacific from May 1945 to August 1946, while it was stationed in the Ryukyu Islands, first on Ie Shima and later on Okinawa.

Initial F-86H received by the group were assigned to the 34th FDS. On the day the unit was activated, no F-86H aircraft had been delivered to George AFB, the group's home station. Initially, the group assigned maintenance personnel, flight crews and aircraft to the 34th FDS, believing that consolidating all assets would expedite training and conversion.

On 15 May 1966 the 34th TFS was organized at Korat RTAFB, assigned to the 41st Air Division but attached for all practical purposes to the resident 388th Tactical Fighter Wing. All equipment, including F-105s, and all personnel came from resources of the 41st Air Division, especially the 36th TFS. The squadron soon entered into combat in Southeast Asia and by 1 July 1966 it was fully manned and equipped. By February 1967 several of the 34th pilots had completed 100 Missions combat tours in support of the 388th Wing's combat mission. Pacific Air Forces transferred the 34th on 15 January 1968 to the 347th TFW, but it remained attached

to the 388th TFW. Like all other Thunderchief combat squadrons, the 34th flew its share of tough strike missions to North Vietnam.

After 31 March 1968, the authorities restricted air operations to the lower panhandle of North Vietnam (below the 19th parallel). Then, on 1 November 1968, the bombing campaign to North Vietnam was halted entirely and combat missions shifted to intensive operations against the enemy in South Vietnam.

On May 9, 1969, the 34th TFS at Korat flew its final F-105 mission and then stood down to convert to the F-4E. Six days later, on May 15, the unit flew its first F-4E sorties.

Combat air cover for the evacuation of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Saigon, Vietnam, Apr 1975. Air cover during the recovery of the *SS Mayaguez* and its crew, May 1975. The 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron performed strike missions in support of a recovery operation for the U.S.S. *Mayaguez*, a merchant freighter captured by Cambodian Khmer Rouge guerrillas. in May 1975.

In November 1979, the 34th TFS became the first fighter squadron to be fully equipped with the F-16; replacement training unit for US and foreign pilots, 27 Sep 1979–1 Jul 1982.

Contributed personnel and aircraft for attrition reserves in Southwest Asia at Torrejon AB, Spain, 18–27 Feb 1991. Deployed aircraft and personnel to Southwest Asia to ensure that Iraq complied with treaty terms, 13 Dec 1991–14 Jun 1992.

June 25, 1996, after being in Southwest Asia only 10 days into their fifth trip, tragedy struck the Khobar Towers housing compound where coalition forces lived. A terrorist bomb, which injured more than 300 airmen, rocked the living area, killing 19 airmen. Although some of the Rams were injured, none were killed in the attack.

Pilots of the 34th FS flew 23 combat sorties into Iraq during Operation Desert Fox, December 1998.

Deployed nine F-16s and 104 personnel to Tyndall AFB, Fla., for a two-week training mission at Combat Archer, February 1999

In June 2000, the 34th FS was the first active duty squadron deployed to Curacao N.A. in support of Coronet Nighthawk, flying drug interdiction missions in Latin America.

The 34th FS flew F-16s combat air patrol sorties in support of Operation Noble Eagle during the 2002 Winter Olympics.

In August 2002, the 34th FS transferred all maintenance personnel to the newly established 388th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron as part of a wing reorganization.

In February 2003 the 34th supported Operation Noble Eagle from Langley Air Force Base, Va.,

by patrolling the skies over Washington, D.C., during the height of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Hill Airmen Back Home: A contingent of more than 200 airmen from the 34th Fighter Squadron and the 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit last week returned home to Hill AFB, Utah, after a four-month deployment to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The Deseret News reported May 29 that the arrival was bittersweet for these airmen because both units are slated to deactivate in July as part of the Air Force's legacy fighter drawdown. The 34th FS, known as the "Rude Rams, is an F-16 unit. "It's not a bad way to go out," said Col. Scott Zobrist, commander of Hill's 388th Fighter Wing, parent unit of the fighter squadron. He added, "It was a fantastic deployment. Everyone came back." Hill is scheduled to lose 24 of its F-16s, but the Utah base is also a candidate to host the F-35 strike fighter. 2010

The 388th Fighter Wing at Hill AFB, Utah, activated its first F-35A Lightning II squadron in a ceremony on base last week, becoming the first operational Air Force unit to fly combat-coded F-35s. Lt. Col. George Watkins received the 34th Fighter Squadron guidon to command the new unit on July 17. The unit is slated to be one of three Active Duty F-35 squadrons at Hill, supported operationally by Air Force Reserve Command's 419th FW. The 34th FS is scheduled to receive its first F-35 airframe in September and grow to 15 aircraft by next summer in time for the Air Force's planned initial operating capability. "There's a lot of work to be done before we get that first jet," said Watkins, who noted airmen are working on an F-35 maintenance plan and have created a flying-hours program for the aircraft. The squadron was formerly one of Hill's F-16 units, and stood down in 2010 as part of a downsizing. "This has got to be one of the finest days of my military career," said Col. David Lyons, current 388th commander and former commander of the 34th. "To see this squadron shut down in 2010 was heartbreaking, but somebody, somewhere had the good sense to bring it back to duty." 2015

Four Full Mission Simulators are helping F-35 pilots at Hill AFB, Utah, develop tactics against ground and airborne threats in a secure and realistic environment, according to a Lockheed Martin release. "The F-35 is going to be an incredible advancement in our capability as an Air Force, and the Full Mission Simulators present an environment to adequately challenge our pilots as they prepare for combat," said Lt. Col. George Watkins, commander of the 34th Fighter Squadron at Hill. The 34th FS-USAF's first operational F-35A squadron is slated to reach combat readiness in August 2016. A total of 143 Air Force pilots and 846 maintainers have qualified through the F-35 Training System, of which the simulators are a "centerpiece." By August 2016, more than 190 USAF pilots and 1,000 maintainers are expected to be mission ready. "All the pieces of the technology puzzle are coming together to support the Air Force's F-35 mission readiness," said Mary Ann Horter, Lockheed's vice president of F-35 sustainment support. "Airmen at Hill are launching the future of aviation, and our focus is supporting them with the most effective training and logistics technologies." 2015

A combat-coded F-35A assigned to Hill AFB, Utah, dropped a GBU-12 laser-guided bomb over the Utah Test and Training Range last week, marking another first on the way to initial operational capability for the Air Force variant of the Joint Strike Fighter. The F-35A has only ever dropped weapons in a testing environment. "This is significant because we're building the

confidence of our pilots by actually dropping something off the airplane instead of simulating weapon employment," said Lt. Col. George Watkins, commander of the 34th Fighter Squadron. Lt. Col. Darrin Dronoff, director of Hill's F-35 program integration office, noted that the members of the 388th and 419th Fighter Wings, which participated in the mission, will "be the airmen called upon to take the F-35 to combat, whenever that call may come." The Air Force is expected to declare IOC between August and December. Aircraft manufacturer Lockheed Martin told reporters during AFA's Air Warfare Symposium last week the company was aiming for the "front end" of that window. F-35 pilots at Hill will begin flying in the four-ship formation-the standard combat configuration-as early as March 2016

ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, England (AFNS) -- Eight F-35A Lightning IIs from the 34th Fighter Squadron, along with supporting units and equipment from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, completed the first F-35A training deployment to Europe, May 7, 2017. While at Royal Air Force Lakenheath, the squadron flew 76 sorties and tallied more than 154 flying hours alongside F-15s from the 48th Fighter Wing.

"This exercise provided our pilots with the opportunity to practice working together to solve complex tactical scenarios using integrated operations that optimized both the F-35 and F-15's capabilities," said Lt. Col. Jason Zumwalt, the 493rd Fighter Squadron commander. "We found that by working together, we can achieve a higher level of performance than either aircraft can achieve alone." During the training deployment, the aircraft forward deployed to Estonia and Bulgaria to maximize training opportunities, build partnerships with allied air forces and familiarize Airmen with Europe's broad and diverse operating conditions.

"This deployment was a great opportunity for the 34th (FS) and the 48th (FW) to practice 4th and 5th generation fighter integration tactics," Zumwalt said. "It was an honor to host the 34th (FS) at RAF Lakenheath, where we were able to integrate our operations in a shared workspace." This training deployment highlighted the complementary capabilities of these different aircraft. It also assisted in validating and refining the bed-down procedures of the fifth generation, multi-role fighter aircraft in England. RAF Lakenheath is scheduled to receive its first permanent F-35A Lightning IIs in 2021.2017

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah (AFNS) -- The 34th Fighter Squadron and 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Hill Air Force Base accepted its final two combat-coded F-35A Lightning IIs June 21, 2017. The addition of the 24th and final aircraft means the units have their full complement of operational jets. "Gaining the 24th F-35A here is another outstanding milestone for the 388th and 419th wings," said Col. Jason Rueschhoff, the 388th Operations Group commander. "This allows both operations and maintenance to fine-tune our tactics, techniques and procedures with a focus on maximizing our combat lethality." This is a pivotal point for combat-capability development said Col. Michael Miles, the 388th Maintenance Group commander. "Having the full number of aircraft in one FS/AMU means we'll soon receive our full personnel and equipment," Miles said. "This allows us to meet all potential combat taskings." The 388th Fighter Wing received its first F-35A in November 2015. Since that time, the unit has developed the best tactics, techniques and procedures, shaping how the F-35A operates in the Air Force, said Capt. Christina Merritt, the 34th AMU officer in charge. Merritt said receiving the 24th aircraft pushes the threshold and helps Airmen further test the limits of the F-35A. The 4th FS

and 4th AMU are expected to receive the next F-35A this summer. A total of 78 jets will be delivered to two additional F-35A squadrons in the 388th FW through 2019. 2017

ÄMARI AIR BASE, Estonia Two F-35A Lightning II aircraft and about 20 supporting Airmen arrived at Ämari Air Base April 25, 2017, from Royal Air Force Lakenheath, England. The F-35As are participating in their first training deployment to Europe. The aircraft and total force Airmen are from the 34th Fighter Squadron and the Air Force Reserve's 466th Fighter Squadron at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The deployment has been planned for some time, has no relations to current events, and was conducted in close coordination with Estonian allies. It allows the F-35A to engage in familiarization training within the European theater while reassuring allies and partners of U.S. dedication to the enduring peace and stability of the region.

This deployment maximizes training opportunities with our allies and partners and serves as a visible demonstration of the United States' resolve to support NATO assurance measures. This is the first overseas flying training deployment for the F-35A, signifying an important milestone and natural progression of the Joint Strike Fighter Program. It is the perfect opportunity for the combat-ready aircraft to train alongside U.S. and allied aircraft in a realistic training environment while demonstrating its operational capabilities. Also, it helps to integrate with NATO's infrastructure and enhance fifth-generation aircraft interoperability. The aircraft and Airmen began arriving in Europe on April 15, and are scheduled to remain in Estonia for a brief period of time before returning to RAF Lakenheath to continue their training deployment. 2017

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 9 Nov 2010

Updated: 5 Feb 2019

Sources

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