

53 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

53 Pursuit Squadron (Fighter) constituted, 22 Nov 1940
Activated, 1 Jan 1941
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, 28 Sep 1942
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 31 Mar 1946
Activated, 15 Oct 1946
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, 27 Oct 1947
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 17 Jun 1948
Redesignated 53 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Redesignated 53 Fighter-Day Squadron, 9 Aug 1954
Redesignated 53 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958
Redesignated 53 Fighter Squadron, 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Rio Hato, Panama, 1 Jan 1941
Albrook Field, CZ, 1 Jan 1941
Rio Hato, Panama, 21 Aug 1941
France Field, CZ, 12 Dec 1941
Chorrera, Panama, 7 Jan–8 Jun 1943
Charleston AAFld, SC, 23 Jun 1943
Biggs Field, TX, 15 Sep 1943
Ainsworth AAFld, NE, 23 Nov 1943–11 Mar 1944
Kingsnorth, England, 5 Apr 1944

Brucheville, France, 7 Jul 1944
Le Mans, France, 29 Aug 1944
Athis, France, 23 Sep 1944
Juvincourt, France, 5 Oct 1944
Le Culot, Belgium, 23 Oct 1944
Aachen, Germany, 28 Mar 1945
Niedermennig, Germany, 8 Apr 1945
Kassel/Rothwesten, Germany, 20 Apr 1945–15 Feb 1946
Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb–31 Mar 1946
France Field, CZ, 15 Oct 1946
Howard Field (later, AFB), CZ, 1 Dec 1947–21 Jul 1948
Furstenfeldbruck AB, Germany, 13 Aug 1948
Bitburg AB, Germany, 22 Jul 1952
Landstuhl (later, Ramstein) AB, Germany, 17 Dec 1956
Bitburg AB, Germany, 3 Oct 1961
Spangdahlem AB, Germany, 1 Feb 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Al Kharj AB, Saudi Arabia, 20 Dec 1990–1 Jul 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

32 Pursuit (later, 32 Fighter) Group, 1 Jan 1941
36 Fighter Group, 23 Jun 1943–31 Mar 1946
36 Fighter (later, 36 Fighter-Bomber; 36 Fighter-Day) Group, 15 Oct 1946
36 Fighter-Day (later, 36 Tactical Fighter; 36 Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957
36 Operations Group, 31 Mar 1992
52 Operations Group, 25 Feb 1994

ATTACHMENTS

36 Fighter-Day Wing, 1 Oct 1956–7 Dec 1957
Tactical Fighter Wing Provisional, 4, 20 Dec 1990–20 Mar 1991
Tactical Fighter Wing Provisional, 4404, 20 Mar 1991–1 Jul 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-26, 1941
P-36, 1941–1942
P-40, 1942–1943
P-47, 1943–1946
P-47, 1946–1947
P(later, F-)80, 1947–1950
F-84, 1950–1953
F-86, 1953–1956
F-100, 1956–1961
F-105, 1961–1966

F-4, 1966–1977

F-15, 1977

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Darrell S. Cramer, #1952

Maj Rudolf A. Bellan

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

France, 1 Sep 1944

Germany, 12 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

May 1956–May 1958

1 Jan–31 Dec 1968

1 Dec 1973–30 Apr 1975

1 Jul 1975–30 Jun 1977

1 Jul 1977–30 Jun 1979

1 Jul 1986–30 Jun 1988

1 Jul 1988–30 Jun 1990

1 Sep 1990–31 Jul 1991

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

1 Oct 1944–17 Dec 1944
18 Dec 1944–15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM



On a Light Grayed Blue Violet disc, thin border Red, piped White, a caricatured, pugnacious tiger proper, strutting on hind legs, wearing a Dark Red turtleneck sweater, a Black and White derby hat, and a pair of White boxing gloves on the forelegs, emitting White speed lines to the rear. COPYRIGHT—Walt Disney. (Approved, 28 Oct 1943.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Air defense for the Panama Canal until Jun 1943. Combat in ETO, 8 May 1944–8 May 1945.

The last unit of the year was the 92d Fighter Squadron from Manston, England, which arrived at Wheelus on 30 November 1951 and departed for home on 19 December, The first for 1952 was the 53d Fighter-Bomber Squadron which arrived on approximately 15 Jan 1952 This unit was, in turn, replaced on 25 Feb by the 23d Fighter-Bomber Squadron, which brought with it approximately 27 officers, 150 airmen, 25 F-84's and two B-26 target tow aircraft. The 23d was at Wheelus primarily for transition training.

Combat in Southwest Asia, Jan–Feb 1991.

Two F-15Cs from the 53 Fighter Squadron, piloted by Lt Col Randy W. May and Capt Eric E. Wickson, shot down two United States Army UH-60s over northern Iraq killing all 26 in no fly zone within Iraq in friendly fire incident. 1994

30 May 1995 An F-15C 79-0068, crashed on take-off killing pilot Maj. Donald Lowry, Jr., 36, who dies en route to hospital. Cause was cross-connected control rods for the flaps. The U.S. Air Force, despite awareness of poorly coordinated color scheme for keeping the rods from being misconnected (identical cases in 1986 and 1991, which, fortunately, were detected before leading to accidents), subjects two mechanics to courts martial for criminally negligent homicide, punishable by four years in prison, a dishonorable discharge and forfeiture of all pay and allowances. One defendant committed suicide on 3 October 1995, the date the court martial was due to begin. On 13 November, the service, citing "justice and the interests of the Air Force", dropped its case against the other mechanic, in exchange for his decision to leave the military.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *36 Fighter Bomber Wing*. @1952.

Unit yearbook. *36 Fighter Bomber Wing, Germany, 1954*.

History. Wheelus Field; The Story of the US Air Force in Libya. The Early days 1944-1952. R. L. Swetzer.

Historical Division Office of Information USAFE. 15 Jan 1965.