

## 54 FIGHTER GROUP



### MISSION

54 Fighter Group mission is to train the world's greatest F-16 pilots while deploying mission ready warfighters.

### LINEAGE

54 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) Constituted, 20 Nov 1940

Activated, 15 Jan 1941

Redesignated 54 Fighter Group, May 1942

Inactivated, 1 May 1944

Reconstituted and redesignated 54 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955

Activated, 18 Aug 1955

Inactivated, 8 Jan 1958

Redesignated 54 Fighter Group, 20 Feb 2014

Activated, 1 Mar 2014

### STATIONS

Hamilton Field, CA, 15 Jan 1941

Paine Field, Everett, WA, 26 Jun 1941

Harding Field, LA, 31 Jan 1942

Bartow AAFld, FL, 11 May 1943-1 May 1944

Greater Pittsburgh Aprt, PA, 18 Aug 1955-8 Jan 1958

Holloman AFB, NM, 2014

### ASSIGNMENTS

First Wing, 15 Jan 1941

II Interceptor Command, 9 Apr 1941

V Support Command, 31 Jan 1942  
III Interceptor (later, Fighter) Command, 18 Apr 1942-1 May 1944  
4708 Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955  
30 Air Division, 8 Jul 1956-8 Jan 1958  
56 Fighter Wing, 1 Mar 2014

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-40  
P-39  
P-51  
F-86  
F-16

#### **COMMANDERS**

Capt Harry A. Hammond, 15 Jan 1941  
Col Phineas K. Merrill, Feb 1941  
Col Charles M. McCorkle, 12 Sep 1942  
Lt Col George B. Greene Jr., 11 Aug 1943  
Lt Col Ward W. Harker, 17 Sep 1943  
Col Joseph S. Holtner, 6 Mar-1 May 1944  
Col Edward F. Roddy, 1955  
Col Rodney J. Petithomme, 1 Mar 2014  
Col Jeffrey R. Jenssen, 27 Jun 2014  
Col James Keen

#### **HONORS**

##### **Service Streamers**

##### **Campaign Streamers**

American Theater

##### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

##### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation  
Aleutian Islands, [Jun]-4 Nov 1942

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
11 Mar 2014-30 Jun 2014

#### **EMBLEM**

Per bend Celeste and Azure, over a bomb bend sinisterwise, a lightning flash palewise Gules, fimbriated Argent, a bend of the last superimposed over all and charged with a jet aircraft in chief Sable, vapor trail of the third, all between an increscent moon and a radiant sun in fess all of the

fourth, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "54TH FIGHTER GROUP" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The split background with the sun and the moon depicts the Group's day and night mission of training combat warriors. The airfoil with contrail represents air superiority, one of the integral roles of airpower. The lightning bolt crossed with a bomb symbolizes the lethality inherent in airpower. (Originally approved, 8 Mar 1957; newest rendition approved, 14 Apr 2014)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 54th Pursuit Group (Interceptor) was established on 20 November 1940, but not activated until 15 January 1941 at Hamilton Field, California. Assigned to the First Wing, the squadron trained in the P-36 and P-40. On 9 April 1941, it was assigned to the II Interceptor Command. On 26 June 1941, the group moved to Paine Field, Everett, Washington. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the group flew defensive missions to protect the northwest coast. On 31 January 1942, it moved to Harding Field, Louisiana. Reassigned to the V Support Command, the unit began flying P-39. On 15 May 1942, the group became the 54th Fighter Group and that summer, the air echelon flew to Alaska to help repulse the Japanese forces that invaded the Aleutian Islands. During those actions, the 54th shot down ten enemy aircraft and earned a Distinguished Unit Citation, and a World War II American Theater Service Streamer. The air echelon rejoined the group in December 1942. On 11 May 1943 moved to Bartow Army Air Field, Florida. The group became a replacement training unit for North American P-51 Mustang pilots.

Officials activated the 54th Fighter Group to host F-16 pilot training at Holloman AFB, N.M., in a ceremony at the base on Tuesday. Holloman "will undoubtedly be a great fit for this new F-16 training mission, and we're looking forward to a great partnership between the 49th Wing and the 54th FG," said 54th FG Commander Col. Rodney Petithomme at the ceremony on March 11. The 311th Fighter Squadron simultaneously activated along with the 54th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and the 54th Operations Support Squadron to support the training mission. Holloman is eventually slated to receive two F-16 squadrons from Luke AFB, Ariz., as compensation for the loss of its combat coded F-22s to Tyndall AFB, Fla., earlier this year. The 54th FG is a detachment of Luke's 56th Fighter Wing, which trains approximately 285 F-16 pilots and 350 crew chiefs annually, according to the release 2014

The first three F-16s assigned to the newly minted 54th Fighter Group at Holloman AFB, N.M., arrived to begin standing up the new F-16 Formal Training Unit there. The fighters touched down in April 1. Overall, Holloman is slated to receive 55 F-16s by October 2015, most of which will transfer directly from Luke AFB, Ariz. Transferring the two F-16 squadrons from Luke replaces Holloman's former F-22 mission and frees up needed space at Luke. "The change in mission to the F-35A [training] at Luke requires new construction in some of the existing F-16 Aircraft Maintenance Unit space," explained Lt. Col. Scott Frederick, commander of Holloman's 311th Fighter Squadron in a release. The recently activated squadron falls under the 54th FG. In addition to it, Holloman

officials plan to stand up a second flying squadron once assets arrive. A total of 917 personnel are transferring from Luke, plus there will be 23 new positions created at Holloman. 2014

The 54th Fighter Group has begun training new F-16 pilots at Holloman AFB, N.M.. The first five student pilots took to the skies for the first time in the F-16 on Nov. 13, followed by two more students on the next day, Lt. Col Scott Fredrick, 311th Fighter Squadron commander, told the newspaper. "This is the culmination of four years of planning and preparation," said Lt. Col. Marshall Chalverus an F-16 instructor pilot and commander of the 54th Operations Support Squadron. Fredrick said Holloman currently has 14 F-16 student pilots. It will take them six to eight months to complete their schoolhouse training. 2014

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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.