

87th FLYING TRAINING SQUADRON



MISSION

The 87th Flying Training Squadron, Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, conducts the T-38 flying training portion of Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training. The squadron has a long and proud tradition of Air Force aviation.

LINEAGE

87th Aero Squadron designated and organized, 18 Aug 1917
Redesignated Squadron B, Park Field, 25 Jul 1918
Demobilized, 1 Dec 1918

87th Pursuit Squadron constituted, 19 Feb 1935
Organized, 1 Mar 1935
Inactivated 1 Sep 1936

Squadron B, Park Field reconstituted and consolidated with 87th Pursuit Squadron, 1 Dec 1936

Demobilized, 1 Jan 1938

87th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 13 Jan 1942
Redesignated 87th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin Engine), 31 Jan 1942
Activated, 9 Feb 1942
Redesignated 87th Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942
Redesignated 87th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 21 Aug 1944
Inactivated, 15 Jul 1947

Redesignated 87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 11 Sep 1952
Activated, 1 Nov 1952
Inactivated, 8 Sep 1955
Activated, 8 Apr 1956

87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron reconstituted and consolidated with 87th Pursuit Squadron,
21 Mar 1979. Consolidated organization designated 87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron.

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1985
Redesignated 87th Flying Training Squadron, 9 Feb 1990
Activated, 2 Apr 1990

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 18 Aug 1917
Selfridge Field, MI, Sep 1917
Park Field, TN, Dec 1917–1 Dec 1918
Maxwell Field, AL, 1 Mar 1935–1 Sep 1936
Dale Mabry Field, FL, 9 Feb 1942
Morris Field, NC, 1 May 1942
Rentschler Field, CT, 25 Jun–28 Sep 1942
Egypt, 12 Nov 1942
Libya, 24 Jan 1943
Tunisia, 13 Mar 1943
Malta, 4 Jul 1943
Sicily, 17 Jul 1943
Southern Italy, 15 Sep 1943
Salsola, Italy, 4 Oct 1943
Madna Airfield, Italy, 17 Nov 1943
Capodichino, Italy, 17 Jan 1944
Pomigliano, Italy, 1 May 1944
Corsica, 11 Jun 1944
Southern France, 22 Aug 1944
Iesi, Italy, 4 Oct 1944
Fano, Italy, 6 Dec 1944
Cesenatico, Italy, 21 Mar 1945
Horsching, Austria, 27 Jul 1945–25 Jun 1947
Langley Field, VA, 25 Jun–15 Jul 1947
Sioux City Muni Aprt, IA, 1 Nov 1952
Bentwaters RAF Station, England, 13 Dec 1954–8 Sep 1955
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 8 Apr 1956
Duluth Intl Aprt, MN, 30 Sep 1968
K.I. Sawyer AFB, MI, 1 May 1971–1 Oct 1985
Laughlin AFB, TX, 2 Apr 1990

ASSIGNMENTS

III Corps, Observation Group, 18 Aug 1917–1 Dec 1918
20th Pursuit Group, 1 Mar 1935–1 Sep 1936
79th Pursuit (later, 79th Fighter) Group, 9 Feb 1942–15 Jul 1947
31st Air Division, 1 Nov 1952
521st Air Defense Group, 16 Feb 1953
Third Air Force, 21 Dec 1954–8 Sep 1955
58th Air Division, 8 Apr 1956
30th Air Division, 1 Sep 1958
Detroit Air Defense Sector, 8 Apr 1959
34th Air Division, 1 Apr 1966
343rd Fighter Group, 30 Sep 1968
23rd Air Division, 28 Aug 1970
21st Air Division, 1 Aug 1981
24th Air Division, 23 Sep 1983–1 Oct 1985
47th Flying Training Wing, 2 Apr 1990
47th Operations Group, 15 Dec 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Unkn, 1917–1918
Unkn, 1935–1936
P-40, 1942–1944
P-47, 1944–1947
F-51, 1952–1953
F-86, 1953–1955
F-86, 1956–1958
F-102A, 1958–1960
F-101B, 1960–1968
F-106, 1968–1985
F-106A
F-106B
T-38, 1990
P-12E
P-40E
P-40F
P-40L
P-47D
F-51D

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 18 Aug 1917-1 Dec 1918
Maj. Charles D. McAllister 1 Mar 35-12 Mar 36
Maj. Bayard Johnson 12 Mar 35-1 Sep 36

Inactive 1 Sep 36-1 Jan 38
LTC Charles E. Grogan, Feb 1942
Maj Benjamin F. Uhrich, Nov 1942
Maj George T. Lee, Nov 1943
Capt Edward J. Byron, by 30 Apr 1944
Col Gorge T. Lee, 19 Jul 1944
Maj John L. Beck, 14 Sep 1944
Maj Benjamin B. Cassidy, 30 Apr 1945-unkn
unkn, Nov 1945-c. 1 Aug 1946
None (not manned), 1-19 Aug 1946
LTC John M. Thacker, 20 Aug 1946-unkn
Unkn, 1 Nov 1952-1953
LTC Michael J. Quirk, by Dec 1953-unkn
Unkn, 8 Apr 1956-1958
LTC Ralph L. Brown, by Mar1958
Maj Forrest M. Keene, by Dec 1959
LTC Charles E. Rigney, by Oct 1960
Maj John Stanislaw Jr., Sep 1961
LTC William W. Griffith, Oct 1961
LTC Carey J. Land, 3 Dec 1962
LTC William H. Champion, 30 Jul 1965
Maj Raymond H. Irvine Jr., by Jun 1966 (acting)
LTC William H. Champion, by Sep 1966
LTC Roy W. King, 7 Nov 1966
LTC Richard Peterson, 26 Apr 1968
LTC Thomas W. Liner, 30 Sep 1968
Col Elwood A. Kees Jr., 20 Aug 1970
LTC Robert S. Johnson, 27 Oct 1971
LTC John T. Wotring, 3 Jul 1972
LTC John E. Perkins, by Jun 1974
LTC Richard G. Harris, c. 25 Jul 1975
LTC Jerry E. Smith, 31 Jul 1978
LTC Ronald E. House, 18 Jul 1979
LTC Robert L. Blair, 2 Jul 1981
LTC John R. Fuhrman, 2 Jul 1982
LTC Fred W. Budinger, 1 Jun 1984-unkn
LTC Robert D. Crawford, 2 Apr 1990
LTC Donald L. Smith, 19 Aug 1991
LTC Michael L. Mosier, 15 Sep 1992
LTC John P. Jackson, 17 May 1993
LTC Robert J. Bloemer Jr., 1 Nov 1993
LTC Timothy G. Malone, 18 Mar 1994
LTC Dennis E. Bellamy, 23 Jun 1995
LTC Warren R. Tate, 9 Jul 1996

LTC Henry F. Myers IV, 1 May 1998
LTC Chris S. Lane, 3 Mar 2000
LTC Jeffrey S. Ellis, 23 Apr 2001
LTC Mark D. Mattison, 13 Jan 2003
LTC Russell L. Mack, 11 Aug 2004
LTC Om Prakash II, 26 Jan 2006

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Egypt-Libya
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Southern France
North Apennines
Po Valley, Rhineland
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
North Africa and Sicily, Mar–17 Aug 1943
Italy, 16–20 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1976–30 Jun 1978
4 May 1981–3 May 1983
16 Mar 1989–15 Mar 1991

EMBLEM



87th Fighter Squadron emblem



87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron emblem



87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron emblem





87th Flying Training Squadron emblem: Per chevron Azure and Argent, in chief three stylized aircraft in pale the lower two diminished in perspective, each emitting a contrail fesswise of the second: above a bull's head overall caboshed Gules, armed Or, eyed White and detailed Sable, between two lightning flashes chevronwise reversed of the fourth shaded of the fifth, all within a diminished bordure Red. Attached above the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Red border and inscribed "87TH FLYING TRAINING SQ" in Red letters. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Red border and inscribed "VIGILANTIA EST PAX" in Red letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and 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 chevron divided shield suggests the unit's far reaching defense capability with modern weaponry, as denoted by the stylized aircraft. The bull reflects the Squadron's previous designation as the "Red Bull Fighter Squadron." The lightning flashes represent rapid response capability and aggressive pursuit of excellence. (Approved, 12 Feb 1969; replaced emblems approved, 16 Jul 1956 and 1 Aug 1945. Approved, 16 Jul 1956)

MOTTO

VIGILANTIA EST PAX—Vigilance is Peace.

NICKNAME

Red Bulls

OPERATIONS

The 87th Flying Training Squadron was originally designated the 87th Aero Squadron August 18, 1917. Following World War II, the 87th was deactivated but was reactivated as the 87th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron on September 11, 1952, and began operations in the F-51 at Sioux City Municipal Airport, Iowa. The unit transitioned to the F-86 Sabre in 1953, and moved overseas to RAF Bentwaters, England, in December 1954 through September 1955. The squadron was again deactivated in 1955. In September 1968, the 87th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron was reactivated and stationed at Duluth International Airport, Minnesota, flying the F-106 Delta Dart. At this time the squadron adopted its "Red Bull" mascot. The F-106 aircraft had a distinctive "Red Bull" head painted on the aircraft tails and distinguished itself around the country. In May 1971, the squadron moved to K.I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan, where it received the

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The 87th was deactivated in September 1985. The 87th was redesignated the 87th Flying Training Squadron and activated April 2, 1990, at Laughlin AFB, TX.

The 87th Flying Training Squadron's lineage goes back to the 87th Aero Squadron which was active in 1917 and 1918. The squadron was designated as the 87th Aero Squadron and organized on 18 August 1917. Active time was very short as the unit was redesignated Squadron B, Park Field, on 25 July 1918.

The unit was reconstituted and consolidated with the 87th Pursuit Squadron on 1 December 1936. The Pursuit Squadron was constituted on 19 February 1935, organized 1 March, and then inactivated for the consolidation. The combined unit was then demobilized on 1 January 1938.

The lineage continued when the unit was constituted as the 87th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) on 13 January 1942 and activated on 9 February at Dale Mabry Field, Florida. After activation the unit was redesignated the 87th Fighter Squadron on 15 May 1942 and was stationed at Morris Field, North Carolina. During this period the squadron was flying P-40 aircraft and soon transferred to the North African Campaign to fly against Rommel's Corps.

In 1944 the 87th converted to the P-47 and pressed the Axis forces up the Italian peninsula following their dynamic support at the invasions of Sicily and Anzio. The end of World War II found the 87th moving from Southern France to Austria where deactivation occurred in 1947. For its part in the European Theater the 87th was awarded ten campaign streamers for Egypt-Libya; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Southern France; North Apennines; Po Valley; and Air Combat, EAME Theater. It also received two unit citations, one for North Africa and Sicily (Mar-Aug 1943), and the second for Italy (16-20 April 1945). Inactivation occurred at Langley Field on 15 July 1947.

On 1 November 1952, the 87th was reactivated and served at Sioux City, Iowa, flying the P-51. It was here they picked up their first jet aircraft, the F-86D in 1953. In December 1954, the 87th moved to Bentwaters, England, and deactivated in September 1955.

In 1956, the 87th was reactivated as a part of the Aerospace Defence Command at Lockborne AFB, Ohio, still flying the F86D. While still at Lockborne AFB, the 87th was reequipped with the F-102 in 1958 and continued to fulfill its alert commitment. In 1960, the F-101 became the primary aircraft of the squadron until deactivation in June 1968.

the 87th FIS in October 1969, and the front line of defense became the F-106. A new and varied mission filled the 87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron operational role as a worldwide deployment capability expanded it's horizons. The 87th utilized air refueling capabilities and the much greater range of the F-106 to fulfill alert commitments in the Alaska Region. An outstanding record of reliability in cold weather operations became the standard of 87th excellence. In addition, the 87th established the reputation in 1968-1970 as the "Flyingest F-106 Squadron in ADC" with over 725 hours of F-106 time logged in February 1969. Every pilot averaged over 35 hours for the month.

In May 1971 the 87th moved to K. I. Sawyer AFB, MI, where it maintained readiness in all-weather intercept techniques, aerial refueling, and fighter-vs-fighter tactics.

The 87th maintained four T-33 at K. I. Sawyer to provide target support for the squadron interceptors, simulating Soviet bomber tactics. In addition, they flew NORAD radar evaluation and logistic support sorties.

The 87th was scheduled to convert to the F-15 in 1984. Due to budget cuts the conversion was cancelled and the squadron again scheduled for inactivation on 1 October 1985.

The 87th FIS was activated in November 1952 at Sioux City Airport. It replaced the Indiana ANG's 163rd FIS with F-51D aircraft. In the fall of 1953 it transitioned into F-86Ds and in December 1954 the unit transferred to USAFE. The squadron was transferred back to ADC at Lockbourne AFB in April 1956, again with F-86Ds and subsequently F-86Ls a year later in 1957. The squadron transitioned into F-102As in late 1958 and in June 1960 the F-102s were exchanged for F-101Bs. In July 1968 the 87th was deactivated at Lockbourne, however, in September 1968 the 11th FIS at Duluth AP with F-106As was deactivated and re-designated the 87th FIS. In May 1971 the 87th FIS moved from Duluth AP to K.I. Sawyer AFB, MI where it remained until deactivation in 1985.

They came quickly. Our first mission, escorting 11 B-25's which bombed German gun positions in the Mareth Line, was carried out smoothly by 12 P-40's each from 85th and 87th Squadrons on March 14, without enemy interference. Warming quickly to their work, the Hawks ran a string of 32 similar missions, totalling 590 sorties, in the next ten days, escorting American flown B-25's, British and South African flown Bostons and Baltimores with great success against the Mareth Line. No bombers had been lost to enemy fighters but we had been saddened by the loss of Lt. Melvin K. Davis of the 85th, missing on March 21. Lt. Bolack of the 85th had been shot down by enemy Ack-Ack on March 21, but belly-landed behind our lines and returned safely. We had our first brushes with enemy fighters and Lt. Adair of the 87th and Lt. Maxwell of the 86th each shot down an ME. 109 on March 22d and 23rd respectively. Lt's. Liggett and McArthur of 87 shared an ME. 109 probable; Lt. Simpson and Capt. Cimaglia of the 85th each contributed 1 damaged. It was a good start, and evidenced the superior pre-battle training given the Group.

The 79th Hawks roared up and down the road, showering the "88" gun positions with 50-caliber bullets in spite of deadly hail of small arms fire thrown up at them. Some pilots made the suicidal run again and again. Flesh and blood could not stand such an attack. The 88's were silenced during that critical 2½ hours, the New Zealanders broke through and forced the Germans to retire in disorder from the Mareth Line and beyond the Gabes Gap; the battle was a brilliant success. The objective justified serious losses but the hearts of the Hawks were heavy when Lt's David H. Brown, Arthur J. Weldon, Robert Spurgin of the 86th, and Robert E. Liggett of the 87th Sqdn., did not return that day. Major Delaney, commanding officer of the 316 Sqdn., v/as wounded in the leg but belly-landed at a friendly airdrome. Word was received,

through the Catholic church, that Lt's Brown and Weldon were prisoners of war in Germany. Lt. John Hoagland of the 85th Sqdn., his motor shot out by ground fire, belly-landed safely in no man's land, was picked up by New Zealanders and sent safely back to his Squadron thus becoming a member of the "Late Arrivals Club". Capt. Borsodi, likewise hit by flak, bailed out of his disabled plane, floated to earth through a terrific artillery barrage and was also returned safely by the New Zealanders. The Group put on other and more spectacular shows, but El Ham-ma wil always remain its outstanding contribution to the North African Campaign. This is evidenced by the following commendation received from General Montgomery, dated March 27, 1943:

The Hun was now definitely on the run and the 79th Hawks harried his retreat to the line he had prepared along the Wadi Akarit. Besides bomber escort missions in the interim, 2 more strafing attacks were launched on March 29 which cost the enemy scores of trucks, guns and light tanks destroyed, and personnel casualties in the hundreds. We lost Capt. Kenneth D. Boggs, Assistant Group Operations Officer who was killed and Lt. Harlan E. Highfield of the 87th Sqdn., who was shot down behind enemy lines by ground fire, and was later reported a prisoner of war in Germany. Capt. Boggs was buried beside his plane, which was later identified by the Coldstream Guards, while pursuing the beaten enemy.

From March 30 to April 16 the Hawks flew 415 sorties escorting the mediums which were pounding the enemy's strong position along the Wadi Akarit. It was on one of these missions, when attacked in force by the Messerschmitts, that Lt. McDonnel, of the 87th (Skeeters) was shot down on April 2, bailed out over the Gulf of Gabes and was never seen again. His comrades of the 87th returned again and again to search the area but found only his empty parachute floating on the sea. In the same fight, with 10 plus ME's, Lt. Jaslow, of the 87th, shot down an ME. 109 and Lt's Watkins and Lee, of the same Squadron, each got one damaged to their credit.

Seventeen more bomber escort missions followed in the next two days, a total of 240 sorties directed at further softening the enemy's Akarit positions and maintaining our control of the air. On April 8, the 8th Army struck again, a quick thrust around the left flank similar to that at El Hamma with the Indian Division spearheading. A synchronised attack by the American 2nd Corps was launched on Gafsa with the objective of making contact with the 8th Army and helping the latter flank the Afrika Corps out of the Wadi Akarit position. The 79th was to support by strafing the enemy's transport and artillery in the rear. The task was assigned to the 85th, 87th and 316th Squadrons with the 86th flying top cover. The Hawks pressed the attack home with the same fury as at El Hamma choking the roads in the enemy's rear with flaming trucks and armored cars and annihilating many gun crews. The 79th had again done its work well but the 85th Squadron lost Lt. Ralph L. Lind, whose plane exploded in midair, and Lt. Thomas S. Anderson who got back to our lines, severely wounded.

The next day, April 21, 85th Squadron was on a fighter-bomber mission against enemy shipping off Cape Bon with 87th Squadron flying top cover, when jumped by 18 ME 109's. In the ensuing dogfight Lts. Berinati and Fitzgerald of the 87th "Skeeters" and Lt. Kelly of the 86th each shot down an ME 109, and Lt. Bolack, of the 85th, damaged another. Lt. John R. Anderson, of the

85th, was lost in this fight, having bailed out over the Gulf of Tunis, and has not been heard from since. On the 22nd, the 79th Group suffered its first non-combat fatality; Flight Officer Janicke, of the 87th, was killed when his plane plunged into a nearby lake during gunnery practice. On April 25, the 79th was relieved on patrol by the 57th Fighter Group, just 10 minutes before the latter encountered the huge convoy of approximately 100 Junkers 52's, escorted by 30 or 40 ME 109's, and shot down 75 of them for a new record for the war. It was a heart-breaking disappointment for the Hawks. Then on the following day, by a similar narrow margin, they missed the slaughter of the 31 huge ME 323's and 9 ME 109's, by the 7th South African Wing. However, their luck changed on April 29th when 86th Sqdn. Was jumped by 15 plus MC 202's and ME 109's, and shot down 3 Macchi's and 2 ME 109's, besides 1 Macchi and 1 ME 109 probably destroyed. Major Watkins, Commanding Officer of the "Commanche", Lts. Hanson, Kaufman, Conly, and Capt. Turner all got 1 destroyed each, and Lts. Conly and Brewer each contributed 1 probable. It was a field day for the 86th as they suffered no losses.

On 30 April, 85, 86, 87 and 316th Squadrons all went out and dive bombed a destroyer carrying troops out of Tunis Harbor, the 86th and 87th each getting direct hits with 500 lb. bombs, which seriously damaged the destroyer—credit for which was later shared with another Group. While reforming after their bombing runs, the 86th was jumped by 15 plus ME-109's, and in the dogfight that followed, Capt. Turner and Lt. Rhynard each shot down an "Me". Lt. Allard probably destroyed one and Lts. Rhynard, Hutt and Minnett each damaged another. In the dog fight, two Comanches collided while chasing the same ME 109 and the debris fell on a third below them, the triple collision causing the tragic loss of Lts. Perry E. Bailey, Thomas H. McCarty, and William D. Hansen of the 86th. 2 parachutes were seen to open and Lt. Bailey was later reported, from home, to have been picked up, uninjured, by an American freighter and taken to a place of safety. Nothing has been heard from McCarty and Hansen.

On the following mission, by all four squadrons the same day, another Italian Destroyer was sunk by the 87th and 316th Squadrons with 3 direct hits, and when the 85th Squadron covering them fought off an attack by 10 ME 109's, Capt. Say shot down an ME 109 and Lt. McNall, a MC 202, without loss to any of the squadrons.

On May 5th, Lt. Ryburn shot down another ME 109. Lt. Cahill was shot down by AA over Tunis on May 6 while on another fighterbomber mission, belly landed, and was seen to emerge from his plane, so it was hoped he became a P.O.W. On the following mission, the same day, 87 Squadron bombed a destroyer full of men, in the Gulf of Tunis, which blew up from direct hits and sank. Then on May 8, while still patrolling the "strangle hold" route around Cape Bon, the 86th, 87th and 316th Squadrons bombing formation with 85th as top cover, was jumped by 30 plus ME 109's and FW 190's. In this dogfight Capt. Dempsey, of the 316th Sqdn., Capt. Say, Lt. Hoagland, and Lt. Hale of the 85th Sqdn., each shot down a Messerschmitt, besides which, Lt. Hale shot down a Fiesler Storch, all without loss to any of our pilots. This was the last challenge by the Luftwaffe in the Tunisian Campaign for we had the air to ourselves while we swept his evacuation shipping from the sea, up to the end of hostilities on May 12. From the 13th through the 23rd the 79th then ran a series of 63 missions escorting friendly destroyers which were

patrolling the waters around the Cape for stragglers, and also covering the first convoys coming through the Sicilian narrows, all without incident.

The 86th had been leading the other 2 squadrons all through the Tunisian campaign with a score of 13 enemy planes destroyed. The 85th, however, jumped into the lead on June 8, their day's bag running their score to 16 destroyed. On June 9, the 86th drew up close when Major Watkins shot down another ME 109, while Capt. Morrisey and Lt's Bedford and Borsodi shared an FW 190 destroyed over Pantelleria, without loss, bringing their total up to 15. The 87th, which had had poor hunting, trailed with a score of 7. The came memorable June 10, when the 87th "Skeeters" electrified the Group and the entire Air Force by shooting down 15 enemy aircraft in 15 furious minutes over Pantelleria without a single loss to themselves, jumping into the lead of 22 destroyed.

It was the sort of dogfight fighter pilots dream of. After shooting down 3 Macchi 202's, stragglers from another dog fight in progress, the "Skeeters" shot down an entire squadron of 12 ME 109's escorting an enemy sea-rescue plane, refraining from attack on the latter. Lt. McArthur covered himself with distinction in shooting down 2 ME 109's, 2 Macchi 202's and damaging another ME 109, before bailing out of his damaged plane which had been crippled in the first onslaught. Lt. McArthur was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for the outstanding achievement. Lt. Anderson's performance was scarcely less distinguished. After shooting down 2 Macchi 202's and 1 ME 109 he returned and assisted Capt. Cossick and Lt. Jory to maintain the circling vigil that resulted in McArthur's rescue from the sea, after dark, by Walrus. There was plenty of glory for all that day. Capt. Ruff and Lt's Kirsch, Watkins, Miller, Adair and Berinati each shot down an ME. Lt. Col. Crogan, Group Operations Officer, contributed the weirdest victory of all by pressing so close, to make sure of his kill, that he sheered off the wing of an ME 109 which was violently evading. The Messerschmitt crashed into the sea, while the Colonel's rugged P-40 safely made port only damaged "Cat. I". Colonel Crogan, however, did not recommend these buzz saw tactics to other pilots. On the same day, the 85th added another to its bag when Lt. Connolly shot down a Macchi 202. That was the last notable operation of the 79th in the North African Campaign. The Hawks continued their series of bomber escort missions without incident, until Pantelleria, after a terrific week's air blitz, surrendered on June 15th. That ended the North African Campaign for the Hawks, who had run a total of 668 sorties in the Pantelleria Operation which netted a bag of 26 destroyed, 1 probable and 4 damaged for the Group, without any losses.

Our Group Commander, Colonel Earl E. Bates, who had been promoted to full Colonel during the campaign, was awarded the British D.F.C. on July 13, for the outstanding work of the Group under his leadership. D.F.C's were also awarded to the Squadron Commanders, Major Jacob F. Schoellkopf of the 85th, Major Tarlton N. Watkins of the 86th and Major Benjamin F. Ulrich of the 87th Squadrons, for the inspiring leadership given their pilots. Major Watkins was ordered home for a rest after serving overseas almost constantly since Pearl Harbor. He was succeeded as Commanding Officer of the 86th Squadron by Capt. Fred A. Borsodi.

Toward the end, as targets diminished, the pilots had time to seek a few of the comforts available in Sicily. The 85th Squadron showed the way by making arrangements with a local doctor to use his unoccupied home for a club. Quickly the house was screened, fitted with electric lights and a comfortable side room equipped with an ME 109 wing and brass rail — a regular "Union Club". Further up the hill, toward Mineo, overlooking the L. G., appeared the "Skeeter" Club sign hung in a stone gateway marking the entrance to a Baron's Villa. Here the 87th Squadron and their guests enjoyed some of the amenities including the novelty of plumbing.

Penny Post was left heavily mined and some of the British detecting personnel lost their lives removing detonators on the day our own operations began, Oct. 1, 1943. Our program accelerated to a solid sheet of strafing. On Oct. 6, despite adverse weather, 79 helped the ground forces to eliminate a stubborn German position which had been counterattacking for twenty four hours, threatening to cut off a number of British tanks and troops. For this achievement, General Montgomery telephoned his thanks. On this particular mission, 79th, with two squadrons, the 86th and 87th, claimed 28 motor transport flammers, 26 damaged and 30 plus personnel killed. One of our pilots, Lt. Steele of 86th, was killed in this action.

Capt. Neilson, now C. O. of the 86 Sq., and Lt. M. K. Davis of 87th, gave us a "kick" by walking back from German territory. Both spoke of the kindness shown them by the Italian peasants, who hid them from German patrols.

On November 16, a few of us flew to Bari with Major Benson, General Montgomery's pilot, in the General's C-47. Some weeks before, the General had invited nearly a dozen officers from Group and 85, 86, 87 Squadrons to accompany him to Cairo. At the airdrome, the General made a really typical statement: "Gentlemen, you are free for forty-eight hours, unless of course, the 8th is in full retreat before then".

"B" party and the aircraft arrived the next day. Everyone helped park the ships and everyone wondered how we were to operate. A couple days of dry weather, however, and we were on operations again. The four Squadrons attacked MT and flew close support targets on the Canadian, New Zealand and "Yellow Axe" (78th Division) fronts. There were several successful missions. On one afternoon, 87th Fighter Squadron, flying towards a close support objective across the Sangro, caught some FW 190's below them. Two were destroyed and one damaged. Captain Lee, the new 87th C. O., accounted for one destroyed and 1 damaged, while Lt. Wainwright claimed his first destroyed enemy aircraft.

The directive for Dec 18th, 1943, from the DAF, called for a strong effort in support of the New Zealand and Indian Divisions thrusting towards Orsogna and Tollo. Thirty missions were flown by Warhawks of 57th and 79th Groups, the RAF 239 Wing and the SAAF Spit-bombers of No. 4 Squadron against enemy gun positions and installations in these areas. In spite of indifferent weather, these attacks were pressed home wherever it was possible to identify targets. Until noon, fourteen missions had bombed well on their targets. Only three missions had failed to locate them. Afternoon, the cloud became 10/10ths solid at 4,000 feet and even lower. Nine missions brought their bombs back while four bombed alternative targets, discovered through

some gap in the clouds. In some instances, the overcast extended down to 1,000 feet above sea level and in some places near Orsogna, the "deck" itself is 1,000 feet above sea level. Thus you can realize that the overcast extended almost to the ground, which accentuates the courage, bravery and determination of every fighterbomber pilot who on the 18th day of December, carried out his attack through such low cloud-layers upon positions known to be well defended by flak. This determination to fulfill a mission caused serious losses for the day. 87th Sqn. Lost two pilots, Lts. Simmons and Specht, 85th Sqn. lost one, Lt. Marshall and the British lost two others. Lt. Specht led his flight through the overcast and was not seen to pull out from his dive. On the same mission, after pulling out at tree top level, Lt. Simmons went on to strafe some MT and, although hit on his first pass, was beginning another when his aircraft "went in", in the Orsogna-Arielli area. This was conspicuous gallantry and outstanding bravery.

Tanks are as vulnerable to snow as MT. The last target on the 9th was a fighter bomber show by twelve aircraft of 85 and 87 squadrons on snow bound tanks near Pescocostanzo. One of our pilots, Lt. Varner, 85 Squadron, was missing after this operation. The missions for the tenth were accepted and given out the evening of the ninth. 86 Squadron was to takeoff at dawn, five minutes after seven. 87 followed ten minutes later. Each flight leader himself judged the weather favorable or unfavorable. Both squadrons elected to fly and they repeated the targets of the 9th, tanks and MT on the mountain roads. Lt. Wiener of the 87th Squadron failed to return. It is the custom for squadrons to send out "recces" for missing pilots. Captain Lee, Commanding Officer of 87 and Lt. Van-divert went out immediately even though Captain Lee had been on the same mission. They found no sign of Lt. Wiener.

79 Group operated from Capodichino on the 18th, sending out 48 sorties to escort surface vessels shelling enemy strongholds from the Gulf of Gaeta, north of Naples. On the 19th and 20th, thirty-six sorties were flown by 85th, 86th and 87th Squadrons from Madnd. This operation, while aircraft Worked from Capodichino on the 20th, using different squadron call signs, served as a decoy to the German interceptor control stations, picking up our flights. We wanted the Hun to believe we were still operating from Madna.

On the 24th, 87th Sqn. again occupied the center of the stage. Thirty plus ME109's and FW190's attacked their formation of 8 Warhawks, led by F/O Bozzi, in an area west and south of Albano. F/O Bozzi in an engagement destroyed the leading FW190, and his skillful leadership prevented loss of any plane in his flight.

In the morning, 87th Sqn. observed 20 plus FW 190's coming down in their bombing dive on Anzio harbor and beaches. The formation engaged the enemy a/c just after they'd released their bombs. Lt. Colgan damaged one FW 190, destroyed another. Lt. AcMoody probably destroyed another FW. Lt. Owen destroyed one, and noticed that when attacked, these FW's let down their wheels. It's hardly a peaceful gesture, done to slow them down so the pilot could bail out or force the P-40 to overshoot, but the results were completely unsatisfactory. Lt. Dean destroyed another FW. Lts. Peterman, Joh, Bell and Sirman each claimed an FW damaged.

On certain occasions our patrols spotted enemy a/c but the Huns refused engagements, preferring to streak for their home bases North of Rome. 99 Sqn., already known for their work on "D" day, attacked ten FW's on the 5th with seven of their P-40's. One FW was destroyed in the encounter, but one of their pilots was missing. 87 and 85 Sqns. on the same day knocked out RR guns which had been shelling the beachhead with serious results.

Two days later 99 Sqn. again contacted the enemy, destroying 3 FW's with no loss to themselves. About an hour later 85 Sqn., with eight a/c, attacked over 20 FW's which had hoped to bomb harbor installations at Anzio. Six or eight ME 109's flew invitingly and lazily about hoping to divert 85th Sqn. from the FW's.

The ruse helped only to destroy 4 FW 190's, 2 ME 109's and damaged 2 FW 190's. 85, not satisfied with the stimulation of a dogfight, knocked out MT and guns by strafing the Appian way while en route to base.

In their afternoon show, 85 destroyed 2 more FW's. 87 also figured in the day's shooting when one of eight FW's diving past their patrol formation was destroyed. On the 5th of Feb., 79 Group destroyed 12 enemy a/c and damaged 2. (No wonder we didn't go to China.)

After the change over to AETC, the small XL became the Wing's tail code. The 87th FTS, which had been activated under the 47th FTW on April 2, 1990 replaced the 86th FTS. The tail stripe of was changed to the "Red Bulls", which reflected the 87th's heritage. The 87th FTS was previously the 87 Fighter Interceptor Squadron (FIS) from K.I. Sawyer AFB Michigan, flying the F-106 Delta Dart with the distinctive red bull's head painted on the tail.

87th Pursuit Squadron HQ-Maxwell Field, AL, 1935-36; Inactive 1936-38 Constituted in the Regular Army on 1 March 1935, assigned to the 20th Pursuit Group, and organized at Maxwell Field, AL, with personnel from the 51st and 54th School Squadrons. Attached to the Air Corps Tactical School. Inactivated on 1 September 1936 at Maxwell Field, AL. Consolidated on 1 December 1936 with the 87th Aero Squadron (a WWI unit organized on 1 August 1917 at Kelly Field, TX; demobilized on 20 July 1920 at Park Field, TN; reconstituted on 1 December 1936). Demobilized on 1 January 1938.

On 13 December 2005, T-38C, tail # 65-0333, assigned to the 87th Flying Training Squadron (FTS), 47th Flying Training Wing (FTW), Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB) TX, crashed after impacting a Black Vulture. The crash occurred at 1537 CST on ranch land 5 miles East of Brackettville, TX. The mishap aircraft (MA) was destroyed and the Mishap Student Pilot (MSP) suffered no injuries. The Mishap Instructor Pilot (MIP) suffered major injuries consisting of fractured thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, foot, and rib and burns involving 17 percent of his body.

The mishap occurred during a Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training low-level navigation sortie for the MSP who occupied the front cockpit. Approximately 14 minutes into the low-level route (1534 CST), the aircraft struck a vulture causing near total loss of the front cockpit canopy transparency, inducing severe aerodynamic drag forces on the airframe. The MIP assumed

control of the aircraft, began a climb and initiated a turn towards LAFB. Because of the sudden increase in drag, the MIP perceived either dual engine failure or compressor stalls in both engines and began analyzing the engines. The MIP intended to adjust throttle position and analyze engine response in terms of RPM, engine temperature and fuel flow after each adjustment. Technical analysis confirmed there was no damage to either engine from organic or inorganic objects (bird remains or canopy fragments). Both engines continued to operate normally until impact with the ground. The MA entered a stall 1:57 minutes after the bird strike. The stall resulted from decreasing airspeed - the result of adjusting the throttles while attempting to assess the perceived engine malfunctions. Technical analysis determined the drag produced by the missing canopy was so great, both engines needed to remain near military power (95 percent RPM or above) to maintain level flight. The aircraft remained in a stalled condition for 30 seconds until the MSP initiated ejection followed by the MIP. In the Board President's opinion three causes led to the mishap: (1) damage caused by the bird strike induced severe drag forces on the aircraft; (2) incorrect diagnosis of engine problems and extensive troubleshooting; and (3) the MIP failed to recognize the mishap aircraft entered a stall at 1688 feet above the ground (AGL). Temporal distortion caused the MIP to rapidly reposition the throttles without allowing adequate time for the engines to settle at selected power settings. Had the engines stabilized, the MIP could have ascertained normally functioning engines and potentially recovered the MA. The chaotic environment (ruptured canopy, perceived aircraft performance, low altitude) degraded the MIP's ability to calmly and accurately complete his analysis. Channelized attention, task saturation and other human factors led the MIP to focus solely on engine analysis to the exclusion of the MA's airspeed, altitude, and eventual stall characteristics, committing the mishap crew to a low altitude ejection at 523 feet AGL. The Board President noted two additional areas of concern. The T-38 lacks a crash-survivable data recorder in the aircraft or ejection seat. The new T-38 Martin-Baker seat to be installed also lacks a data memory device. The T-38C simulator lacks software capability to both simulate the drag increase from a lost canopy and input drag coefficients into a flying simulation.

LAUGHLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFNS) -- The members involved in the T-38 Talon crash from Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, on Nov. 20, 2017 have been identified. The deceased, Capt. Paul J. Barbour, 32, was the air crew flight equipment flight commander with the 47th Operations Support Squadron and an instructor pilot with the 87th Flying Training Squadron. He was from Van Nuys, California, and is survived by his spouse, mother, father and sister. Injured was Capt. Joshua Hammervold, instructor pilot for the 87th FTS. He was transported to Val Verde Regional Medical Center where he was treated for his injuries. He was released Nov. 21 and is in good condition. "Tragic events like this are difficult for everyone – family, friends, co-workers, supervisors and our entire Air Force," said Col. Charlie Velino, 47th Flying Training Wing commander. "Every day, our pilots take a risk as they step into the cockpit, and every day they operate with the utmost skill, professionalism and dedication to train the next generation of flying Airmen and to ensure the safety of this great nation." The crash occurred Nov. 20 at around 4 p.m. approximately 14 miles northwest of the base near Spur 454 and U.S. 90 in Del Rio, Texas. The cause of the accident is under investigation. "Rest assured, we are doing everything we can to support the investigation and prevent future incidents," said Velino.

Air Force Order of Battle

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