

414th COMBAT TRAINING SQUADRON



MISSION

414th Combat Training Squadron CTS conducts exercise scenarios that maximize the combat readiness and survivability of participants by providing a realistic training environment. Combat units from the United States and allied countries engage in combat training scenarios conducted within the Nevada Test and Training Range Complex.

In a typical Red Flag exercise, Blue forces (friendly) engage Red forces (hostile) in combat situations. Blue forces are units from ACC, Air Mobility Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Pacific Air Forces, Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force Reserve, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and allied air forces. A Blue forces commander who orchestrates the employment plan leads them. Red forces, composed of the 64th and 65th Aggressor Squadrons flying F-16s and F-15s, provide air threats through the emulation of enemy tactics. Other U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps units flying in concert with electronic ground defenses and communications and radar jamming equipment often augment them.

Each Red Flag exercise normally involves a variety of interdiction, attack, air superiority, defense suppression, airlift, air refueling and reconnaissance aircraft. Within a typical 12-month period, more than 1,200 aircraft fly 20,000 plus sorties while training more than 26,750 personnel.

Since combat is no place to train aircrews, Red Flag provides a peacetime “battlefield” within which our combat air forces can train. Inside this battlefield, aircrews train to fight together, survive together and win together.

LINEAGE

414th Night Fighter Squadron constituted, 21 Jan 1943

Activated, 26 Jan 1943

Inactivated, 1 Sep 1947

Redesignated 414th Fighter Weapons Squadron, 22 Aug 1969

Activated, 15 Oct 1969
Inactivated, 30 Dec 1981
Redesignated 414th Composite Training Squadron and activated, 1 Nov 1991
Redesignated 414th Training Squadron, 15 Jan 1993
Redesignated 414th Combat Training Squadron, 1 Jul 1994

STATIONS

Orlando AB, FL, 26 Jan 1943
Kissimmee AAFld, FL, 8 Feb–21 Apr 1943 (air echelon in England, 31 Mar–16 Jul 1943)
La Senia, Algeria, 10 May 1943
Rerhaia, Algeria, 11 Jun 1943 (detachment operated from Protville, Tunisia, 23–29 Jul 1943)
Elmas, Sardinia, 11 Nov 1943 (detachments operated from Ghisonaccia, Corsica, 9 Jan–4 Feb 1944 and 20 Mar–Jul 1944; Borgo, Corsica, 5 Feb–Jul 1944; Alghero, Sardinia, 11 May–22 Jun 1944)
Alghero, Sardinia, 22 Jun 1944
Borgo, Corsica, 5 Sep 1944
Pisa, Italy, 13 Oct 1944
Pontedera, Italy, 25 Nov 1944 (detachment operated from Florennes, Belgium, 27 Jan–3 Apr 1945; Strossfeld, Germany, 3–23 Apr 1945)
Bagnoli, Italy, 15 Jul–7 Aug 1945
Lemoore AAFld, CA, 26 Aug 1945
Camp Pinedale, CA, 19 Oct 1945
March Field, CA, 8 Mar 1946
Shaw Field, SC, 15 Aug 1946–16 Mar 1947
Rio Hato, Panama, 24 Mar–1 Sep 1947
Nellis AFB, NV, 15 Oct 1969–30 Dec 1981
Nellis AFB, NV, 1 Nov 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

AAF School of Applied Tactics, 26 Jan 1943 (air echelon attached to VIII Fighter Command, 31 Mar–2 Jul 1943)
Twelfth Air Force, 10 May 1943 2d Air Defense (later, 63rd Fighter) Wing, 29 May 1943
62nd Fighter Wing, 21 Sep 1944 (detachment attached to 422nd Night Fighter Squadron, 27 Jan–23 Apr 1945)
XXII Tactical Air Command, 1 Apr 1945
Twelfth Air Force, 7 Jun 1945
Fourth Air Force, 26 Aug 1945
Air Defense Command, 21 Mar 1946
Tactical Air Command, 31 Jul 1946
Third Air Force, 1 Oct 1946
Ninth Air Force, 1 Nov 1946
6th Fighter Wing, 24 Mar–1 Sep 1947
57th Fighter Weapons (later, 57th Tactical Training; 57th Fighter Weapons) Wing, 15 Oct 1969–30 Dec 1981

57th Operations Group, 1 Nov 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-20, 1943

P-70, 1943

Beaufighter, 1943-1945

Beaufighter VI

Beaufighter VIII

P-61B

P-38, 1945

P-51, 1945, 1946-1947

P-61, 1945, 1946-1947

F-4, 1969-1981

F-4E

F-16, 1991

F-16C

F-16D

COMMANDERS

Maj A. Cowgill, 26 Jan 1943

Maj Earl T. Smith, 17 Sep 1943

Maj Carroll H. Bolender, 1 Jun 1944

LTC Julius E. Alford, 5 Aug 1946

Maj Victor M. Mahr, 14 Oct 1946-1 Sep 1947

LTC William L. Kirk, 15 Oct 1969

LTC D. C. Armstrong, 1971

LTC Antony Gardecki, 1972

LTC Paul L. Chase, 1973

LTC Donnie M. Tribble, 5 Oct 1977

LTC Larry R. Keith, Jan 78

LTC James L. Donnellan, 2 Mar 1978

LTC Hugh A. Moreland, Sep 1978

LTC Buster C. Glosson, 25 Aug 1980

Col Michael R. Blaisdell, 1 Jun 1981-30 Dec 1981

Col Bobby D. Buffkin, 1 Nov 1991

Col William L. Schwetke, 1 Aug 1992

Col Thomnas A. Oram, 11 Jul 1994

LTC Dale A. Burton, 14 Nov 1997

Col Michael Droz, 30 Jul 1999

Col Ronald T. Mittenzwei, 2 Mar 2001

Col Joel E. Malone, Jul 2003

Col Michael E. McKinney, May 2004

Col Jarrett D. Jordan, Jul 2005

LTC Thomas A. Bouley, Mar 2007

Col Francis G. Neubeck, Jr., Jul 2007
Col Martin J. Schans, Jr., Jul 2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

MTO, 23–24 Jan 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

25 Oct 1969–25 Sep 1971

1 Jul 1974–30 Jun 1976

1 Jun 1995–31 May 1997

1 Jun 1998–31 May 2000

1 Jun 2001–31 May 2003

1 Jun 2003–31 May 2004

1 Jun 2004–31 May 2006

EMBLEM



414th Night Fighter Squadron emblem

414th Fighter Weapons Squadron emblem: On a Blue disc a Yellow and Black checkered band bendwise surmounted by a Gray shield charged with a Yellow and Black bullseye with Black ring sight markings; descending to the center of the bullseye a Red projectile bend sinisterwise trailing five Black vapor trails. (Approved, 22 Oct 1980)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in MTO and ETO, 24 Jul 1943–29 Apr 1945. Not operational, Jun 1945–Aug 1946.

Established as a Night Fighter Squadron in January 1943, trained in Florida with a specialized version of the A-20 Havoc modified for night combat.

Deployed to Twelfth Air Force in Algeria, May 1943. Equipped with British Bristol Beaufighter, carried out defensive night patrols over Allied held territory during the North African campaign, also conducted night interdiction raids on German positions in Algeria and Tunisia. After German collapse in North Africa, continued defensive patrols and offensive night attacks on Axis positions on Sardinia, Corsica, and in Italy. Detachment operated with Ninth Air Force in Belgium in late 1944-1945 during the Battle of the Bulge. Re-equipped with modified Lockheed P-38L Lightning (designated P-38M) for night operations fitted with an AN/APS-6 radar in an external radome underneath the nose, relocated radio equipment and anti-flash gun muzzles in early 1945.

First P-61 received: Dec. 20, 1944

First enemy aircraft destroyed by P-61 crew: Feb. 4, 1945

Squadron total enemy aircraft destroyed by P-61 crews: 5

Squadron stood down after the end of the European War, May 1945. Designated as not operational, June 1945 – August 1946. Reassigned administratively to Shaw AAF, South Carolina, 15 Aug 1946 and equipped with returned P-61 Black Widow Night Fighters. Never activated, squadron was inactivated 16 Mar 1947, with aircraft being reassigned to the 319th Fighter Squadron (All Weather) and flown to Howard Field, Canal Zone, 1947 for defense of Panama Canal under Air Defense Command.

Re-designated as the 414th Fighter Weapons Squadron on 22 August 1969, the squadron reactivated on 15 October 1969 at Nellis AFB, NV, replacing the 4538th Combat Crew Training Squadron. Assigned to the 57th Fighter Weapons (later, 57th Tactical Training; 57th Fighter Weapons) Wing, the 414th was tasked with combat crew training, using the F-4C Phantom II aircraft.

The 414 CTS assumed the duties of the 4440th Tactical Fighter Training Group (Red Flag) on 1 March 1976, performing combat fighter weapons training with the F-4 until the end of 1981, when inactivated and squadron was reassigned to the USAF Fighter Weapons School, being re-designated as "F-4 Division".

The squadron was redesignated as the 414th Composite Training Squadron, and activated, on November 1, 1991 at Nellis AFB. Assigned to the 57th Wing's Operations Group, and flying the F-16, the squadron was tasked with conducting Red Flag exercises. In 1993, the unit was renamed the 414th Training Squadron, and in 1994, the 414th Combat Training Squadron. Performed aggressor training with F-16C Fighting Falcons until 2005 when assets were reassigned to the 65th Aggressor Squadron, 57th Adversary Tactics Group.

The 414th Combat Training Squadron, which oversees Red Flag, is making changes to the exercise for improved efficiency at Nellis Air Force Base. Red Flag is a realistic multi-domain training exercise that maximizes the combat readiness and survivability of participants by providing a robust, accurate training environment. "We see units arrive at Nellis at varying levels of being prepared," said Col. Michael Mathes, 414 CTS commander. "By the end of three weeks, units are not just capable of executing their wartime mission with confidence. They are ready for combat."

While early Red Flag exercises focused on survivability of combat pilots, Red Flag now integrates the five core functions of the Air Force: intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, air superiority, strike and personnel recovery to ensure Airmen are ready for today's fight. "The value of integration exercises like Red Flag is in the building block approach," Mathes said. "It starts with unit-level preparation, making sure that unit can function as a team. It moves to package integration, which is making sure that functional teams, like strike fighters and bombers – can work together. Then we get to Red Flag where multi-package integration comes into play, learning how to integrate different packages –superiority, strike and mobility aircraft -- into one mission to achieve the same goal."

According to Mathes, Red Flag exercises enable the Air Force to more quickly harness readiness through exposure to professional adversaries, also known as the red force; working with coalition

and joint partners and integration with the personnel recovery mission in a singular environment and scenario. Looking to the future, we can expect Red Flag to continue to evolve to meet today's challenges. "We're continuing to improve threat replication, how we focus on the supported commands and implementing improvements to our debrief process to make the training more effective and efficient," Mathes said.

Expanding on the latter, Mathes explained the importance of debriefs – the process of examining a completed mission to assess what went well and what could be improved – and why they are critical to the training.

"We are leveraging new technology to validate mission effects and compile data so we can quickly give facts to the mission commander, tactical mentors and air expeditionary wing leadership," said Mathes. "This facilitates a more efficient and effective process of providing information for the human-to-human debrief, where the learning really happens." Additionally, Mathes envisions further improvements for the exercise, especially with international partners. Roughly 2,900 personnel assigned to 39 units are participating in Red Flag 19-1. Ninety-five aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force are scheduled to complete 26 missions over a three-week period. Mathes said the partnership with U.S. allies and other nations will become the most important part of the exercise because a strong coalition will be critical to the success of future conflicts. Although the aircraft in the sky are visible reminders of air power, Mathes said none of it is possible without the tireless work behind the scenes that make Red Flag and the Air Force a success.

"It's important to give thanks to the Airmen and joint participants and not just to the operations personnel, but also the maintenance and support," Mathes said. "The real facilitator (for Red Flag) is the human element that chooses to sacrifice their time and energy to come together for unity of purpose. Airmen make airpower. 2019

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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