

445th FLIGHT TEST SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

445th Fighter Squadron (Special) constituted, 19 Feb 1943

Activated, 24 Feb 1943

Redesignated 445th Fighter Squadron (Twin-Engine) (Special), 15 Mar 1943

Redesignated 445th Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, 11 Mar 1944

Redesignated 445th Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, 18 Jan 1946

Inactivated, 3 Jul 1946

Redesignated 445th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 11 Feb 1953

Activated, 20 Mar 1953

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1968

6512 Test Squadron designated and activated, 1 Oct 1969

445th Fighter Interceptor Squadron and 6512 Test Squadron consolidated, 1 Oct 1992

Redesignated 445th Test Squadron, 2 Oct 1992

Redesignated 445th Flight Test Squadron, 1 Mar 1994

Inactivated, 30 Nov 2001

Activated, 11 Mar 2004

STATIONS

Orlando AB, FL, 24 Feb 1943

Muroc, CA, 11 Mar 1944

Palmdale AAFld, CA, 1 Jun 1944

Bakersfield Muni Aprt, CA, 11 Oct 1944

Santa Maria AAFld, CA, 10 Jul 1945
March Field, CA, 3 Dec 1945-3 Jul 1946
Geiger Field, WA, 20 Mar 1953
Wurtsmith AFB, MI, 18 Aug 1955-30 Sep 1968
Edwards AFB, CA, 1 Oct 1969-30 Nov 2001
Edwards AFB, CA, 11 Mar 2004

ASSIGNMENTS

50th Fighter Group, 24 Feb 1943
Tactical Air Division, AAF Tactical Center, 10 Feb 1944
412th Fighter Group, 11 Mar 1944-3 Jul 1946
530th Air Defense Group, 20 Mar 1953
412th Fighter Group, 18 Aug 1955
Sault Sainte Marie Air Defense Sector, 1 Apr 1960
Detroit Air Defense Sector, 15 Jul 1963
34th Air Division, 1 Apr 1966-30 Sep 1968
6512th Test Group (later, 6510th Test Wing), 1 Oct 1969
Air Force Flight Test Center, 1 Jan 1973
6510th (later, 412th) Test Wing, 1 Mar 1978
412th Operations Group, 1 Oct 1993-30 Nov 2001
412th Operations Group, 11 Mar 2004

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-39N
P-40M
P-51A
P-47D
P-38G
P-51A
P-38G
P-39N
UC-78
P-38F
P-39D
A-24B
P-47C
P-39Q
P-38H
RA-24B
P-40N
P-51D
P-38G
XP-80A
P-80A

RA-24B
RA-24B
P-39Q
BT-13
C-78
L-3
L-4
XR-3
XR-4
Beaufighter
YP-59A, 1944-1945
P-59B, 1945
A-25
A-36
B-17
Zeke-52
P-80, 1945-1946
F-86, 1953-1955
F-86D
F-89, 1955-1960
F-89D
F-89H
F-89J
F-101, 1960-1968
F-101B
F-101F
F-4
A-7
T-38
C-135
T-37
F-16C
F-16D

COMMANDERS

Cpt Albert Criz, 9 Mar 1943
Maj Frank E. Adkins, 10 Jul 1943
Maj Albert Criz, 15 Nov 1943
Cpt William E. Smith, 1 Apr 1944
Maj Charles W. King, 3 May 1944
LTC Wynn D. Miller, 10 Jun 1944
Maj Jack R. Brown, 20 Oct 1945
LTC John C. Herbst, 9 Nov 1945-unkn
Maj Wilbur C. Bechtold, by Jun 1953

LTC Squire T. O'Conner, 7 Sep 1953
LTC Weston M. Lennox, Oct 1955
LTC Marion C. Morphew Jr., 24 Jun 1958
Maj Michael Navarro (interim), 12 Jun 1961
LTC Sam C. Wilkerson Jr., Jul 1961
LTC William E. Shelton, 28 Jun 1962
Col Franklin C. Crain, Jul 1965
LTC Jack H. Egginton, 18 Jan 1967
Unkn, Oct 1967-30 Sep 1968
Col David M. Crichlow, 1 Oct 1969
Col Budd F. Knapp, 29 Jul 1970
LTC William T. Twinting, 4 Jul 1972
LTC J. D. Bowline, by Jun 1974
LTC Raymond C. Grazier, 26 Oct 1975
LTC Richard K. Voehl, 1 Oct 1976
LTC J. M. Manly, 1 Sep 1978
LTC Robert M. Howard, 15 Jul 1980
LTC Gerald H. Sherrill, 6 Jul 1982
LTC Carl V. Lyday, 16 Jan 1984
LTC Wilbert D. Pearson Jr., 3 Apr 1987
LTC Ted M. McFarland, 13 Feb 1989
LTC Warren A. Hansen, 17 May 1990
LTC Daniel C. McCorry Jr., 15 May 1992
LTC David W. Eidsaune, 8 Jul 1994
LTC Mark B. Fish, 16 Aug 1996
LTC Regis T. Hancock, 20 Aug 1998
LTC William J. Thornton, 7 Jul 2000-30 Nov 2001
LTC Chris Spinelli

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Oct 1969-14 Jan 1971

1 Jan 1973-1 May 1974
1 Jan 1975-31 Dec 1976
1 Jan 1983-31 Dec 1984
1 Jan 1985-31 Dec 1986
1 Jan-31 Dec 1996
1 Jan 1997-31 Dec 1998
1 Jan 2013-31 Dec 2013

EMBLEM



Approved, 11 Jun 1976

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The lineage of the 445th Flight Test Squadron dates to the Air Force's 445th Fighter Squadron, which was activated in February 1943 and spent the early part of its career at Muroc [now Edwards AFB], testing the nation's first jet aircraft. The 445th Fighter Squadron the first squadron to be assigned to the 412th Fighter Group [now the 412th Test Wing] performed a twofold test and training mission: it participated in both experimental development and tactical utility tests with the new P-59 jet-powered aircraft. In the summer of 1944, for example, the squadron participated in critical Army Air Force board tests designed to explore the capabilities of jet-propelled aircraft against conventional fighters.

Inactivated in 1946, the 445th was returned to active service as a Fighter-Inceptor Squadron in 1953 at Geiger Field, Washington, flying F-86s.

4 July 1946 Pacific Theatre ace Lt. Col. John C. "Pappy" Herbst (18 credited victories) is mortally injured at the age of 36 in front of 30,000 people at the San Diego County Fair when his Lockheed P-80A-1-LO Shooting Star, 44-85083, of the 445th Fighter Squadron, 412th Fighter Group, March Field, California, crashes after failing to pull up in a dive just west of the Del Mar Fairgrounds while flying with an early jet demonstration team. Herbst crashed in a dry riverbed near the Del Mar Racetrack after his aircraft stalled during an encore of their routine finale in which the pair of P-80s did a loop while configured to land. Herbst had married his second wife less than 24 hours before. Herbst's wingman, Major Robin Olds narrowly avoided the same fate while flying in formation.

The 445th FIS was born on the 20th of March in 1953 at Geiger Field. In July, the first F-86D aircraft were assigned. The pilots and airmen were relatively inexperienced and the maintenance crew small. Within eighteen months, this group became the finest combat unit in the Western Air Defense Force.

The highpoint in July 1954 was "Operation Checkpoint," a joint SAC-ADC exercise that extended for 3 days. With sunny days and early takeoffs, the pilot's proficiency increased rapidly and aircraft maintenance became the best in ADC.

In September of 1954, the 445th FIS was named tops in Western Air Defense, and led in hours flown, 810:30 per U.E., aircraft, scramble to airborne and turn around time.

On 20 November, rocketry training began at Yuma County Airport. When the smoke had cleared, every important Air Defense Command record in FHRT Air Rocketry had been broken.

In March of 1955, the 445th FIS became the first squadron in the 9th Air Division and the second in the Air Defense Command to fly over a thousand hours (1007:45). Outstanding maintenance was a key factor.

In July, the W.A.D.F. Shoot Off was staged at Yuma County Airport. The 445th FIS, once again, took the 9th Air Division Rocketry trophy.

On July 2, Geiger Field Base Commander, Col. Willcox, presented the 445th FIS with its first Flying Safety plaque. 2,750 hours flown without an accident.

On 17 July 55, Lt. Colonel Squire T. O'Connor was reassigned to Air Command and Staff School at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. The new squadron commander was Lt. Colonel Warren A. Bennett from the 518th FIS, George AFB, CA. He had been assigned as Executive Officer at George..

In March 1956 the 445th FIS received their first two F-89Hs, and they were the first ADC squadron to receive this version of the Scorpion, some two years later than originally scheduled. Further teething problems showed up with the Hs as the 445th attempted to get them operational, as the battery squibs kept blowing when they attempted to get the Falcon missiles ready for combat

status. With this resolved, the 445th then earned the ADC's "A" Award, which was given to squadrons that distinguished themselves by an outstanding achievement. Eighteen months later the F-89H was replaced by the F-89J, thus the 445th FIS also had the distinction of flying the F-89H longer than any other ADC squadron.

The 445th did have one slightly humorous incident occur when one of their Scorpions landed with a small fire in the aircraft. As the aircraft slowed on the runway, both crew members evacuated the cockpit by climbing out onto the wing, and then both men pulled their ripcords and jumped the six feet to the ground. The abandoned Scorpion continued off the end of the runway and came to rest without further damage.

In the fall of 1959 the 445th F-89Js were replaced by F-101Bs, with only eight Scorpions remaining by the end of the year. Conversion to Voodoos was completed in early 1960.

The unit then transferred to Wurtsmith AFB, Michigan, flying F-89s and later to the Sault Sainte Marie and Detroit Air Defense Sections flying the F-101 before it was inactivated again in 1968.

On 2 October 1992, the 50th anniversary of the flight of the P-59, the 6512th Test Squadron, known locally as "Test Ops," was redesignated the 445th commemoration of the original 445th Fighter Squadron's testing of America's first jet fighter at Muroc.

The legacy of flight test excellence that began Muroc as America's first jet aircraft testers continues today. On 31 July 1995, the 445th surpassed 30,000 accident-free F-15 flight hours. Current active test programs include the T-38C Avionics Upgrade Program, Joint Helmet-Mounted Cueing System, AIM-9X Missile development, and Suite 4, the most indepth F-15 mission software upgrade to date. The 445th Flight Test Squadron eagerly awaits the challenges of tomorrow.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 11 Dec 2010

Updated: 25 May 2012

Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit history. *Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, CA, 50th Anniversary. 1951-2001.*

Unit yearbook. *25th Air Division (Defense). 1953-1954.*