

## 49 FIGHTER SQUADRON



### MISSION

49 Fighter Squadron trains for its mission as a combat-ready fighter squadron capable of executing strategic attack, interdiction, and counter air missions in support of USAFE, USEC and NATO operations. It employs the full array of air superiority and surface attack munitions to include the most advanced precision-guided weapons in the USAF inventory. The squadron is capable of deploying to any theater of operations in the world.

### LINEAGE

57 Bombardment Squadron (Light) constituted, 20 Nov 1940  
Activated, 15 Jan 1941  
Redesignated 57 Bombardment Squadron (Dive), 28 Aug 1942  
Redesignated 49 Fighter Bomber Squadron, 10 Aug 1943  
Redesignated 49 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 30 May 1944  
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945  
Redesignated 49 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 25 Jun 1952  
Activated, 10 Jul 1952  
Redesignated 49 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958  
Redesignated 49 Fighter Squadron, 30 Nov 1991

### STATIONS

Savannah, GA, 15 Jan 1941  
Will Rogers Field, OK, 23 May 1941  
Savannah, GA, 7 Feb 1942  
Key Field, MS, 28 Jun 1942  
William Northern Field, TN, 15 Aug 1943  
Walterboro AAFld, SC, 27 Jan–13 Mar 1944  
Ibsley, England, 29 Mar 1944  
Deux Jumeaux, France, 4 Jul 1944

Villacoublay, France, 29 Aug 1944  
Cambrai/Niergnies, France, 15 Sep 1944  
St Trond, Belgium, 30 Sep 1944  
Kelz, Germany, 26 Mar 1945  
Kassel, Germany, c. 17 Apr 1945  
Illesheim, Germany, 29 Apr 1945  
Laon, France, 5 Jul–Aug 1945  
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 9 Sep–7 Nov 1945  
Chaumont AB, France, 10 Jul 1952  
RAF Lakenheath, England, 15 Jan 1960

#### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Taif, Saudi Arabia, 2 Sep 1990–15 Mar 1991  
Incirlik AB, Turkey, Sep–Dec 1991

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

48<sup>th</sup> Bombardment (later, 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber; 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1941–7 Nov 1945  
48<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber Group, 10 Jul 1952  
48<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Bomber (later, 48<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter; 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957  
48<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 31 Mar 1992

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing [Provisional], 2 Sep 1990–15 Mar 1991  
7440<sup>th</sup> Composite Wing, Sep–Dec 1991

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

A-18, 1941  
A-20, 1941–1942  
A-35, 1942–1943  
P-40, 1943  
P-39, 1943–1944  
P-47, 1944–1945  
F-84, 1952–1954  
F-86, 1953–1956  
F-100, 1956–1972  
F-4, 1974–1977  
F-111, 1977–1992  
F-15, 1992  
P-39N  
P-40N  
P-47G  
P-47D  
A-24A  
F-84F

F-84G  
F-86F  
F-100D  
F-100F  
F-111F  
F-15E

## **COMMANDERS**

1lt R. D. Callaway, 15 Jan 1941  
Unkn, Jan 1942  
Capt Ward P. Robinson, Unkn  
Capt J. O. Cimaglia, 16 Nov 1943  
Capt J. D. Collinsworth, 4 Jan 1944  
Maj James P. Mulloy, 9 Jan 1944  
Capt Homer A. Forsythe, C. 19 Jan 1944  
Capt Harold L. Mcneely, 13 Feb 1944  
Maj Richard P. Morrissey, 21 Feb 1944  
Maj Charles R. Fischette, 19 Jul 1944  
Capt Norman S. Orwat, 16 Oct 1944  
Maj Victor N. Cabas, 21 Nov 1944  
Maj Jerome I. Steeves, 4 Apr 1945  
Maj Lloyd V. Bradbury, 12 Jun-7 Nov 1945  
Lt Col Arthur D. Thomas, 10 Jul 1952  
Maj Woodfin M. Sullivan, 3 Apr 1953  
Maj Otto C. Kemp, 7 May 1955  
Maj Ira A. Swope, 3 Feb 1957  
Maj William T. Whisner Jr., C. Jun 1957  
Lt Col Bernie S. Bass, 23 Feb 1959  
Maj John E. Pitts Jr., 10 Jul 1961  
Maj Norman H. Todd, 28 May 1964  
Maj Vance T. Leuthold, 2 Aug 1964  
Lt Col Warren D. Curton, 15 Nov 1964  
Lt Col William J. Holton, 2 Aug 1965  
Lt Col Shelby A. Evans, C. Jul 1967  
Lt Col Gerald D. Ray, 22 Sep 1969  
Lt Col Carl R. Wiedenhoeft, 1 Sep 1970  
Lt Col Terance E. Cawley, 1 Nov 1970  
Lt Col Norman H. Rushton, 1 Sep 1972-26 Jan 1973  
Not Manned, 27 Jan 1973-9 Jun 1974  
Maj Robert J. Herculson, 10 Jun 1974  
Lt Col Ronald M. Miller, 18 Jul 1974  
Lt Col James W. Grassman, 1 Jul 1975  
Lt Col James C. Sharp, 1 Jun 1977  
Lt Col James E. Salminen, 14 Oct 1977

Lt Col Philip E. Davis, 16 Mar 1979  
Lt Col Richard W. Balstad, 17 Apr 1981  
Lt Col John L. Grozier, 10 Jun 1983  
Lt Col Paul F. Fazackerley, 10 May 1985  
Lt Col Patrick F. Nolte, 17 Feb 1987  
Lt Col Ronnie A. Stanfill, 10 Sep 1988  
Lt Col Tommy F. Crawford, 30 Jun 1989  
Lt Col James M. Young, 1 Dec 1990  
Lt Col Kenneth A. Combs, 14 Jun 1991  
Lt Col Wayne I. Mudge, 14 Aug 1992  
Lt Col Mark G. Beesley, 5 Sep 1994  
Lt Col Joseph R. Wood, 7 Aug 1995  
Lt Col John W. Hesterman Iii, 12 May 1997  
Lt Col Warren L. Henderson, 21 May 1998  
Lt Col Steve J. Depalmer, 12 May 2000  
Lt Col Ronald K. Laughbaum, 8 Feb 2002  
Lt Col William D. Miles, 2 Jun 2003  
Lt Col Daniel Debree, 21 May 2004  
Lt Col William A. Reese, 17 Apr 2006  
Lt Col Shawn D. Pederson, 1 Jul 2007  
Lt Col John Bunnell

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Antisubmarine, American Theater  
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 Citation  
Germany, 6 Dec 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1961–29 Feb 1964  
1 Jul 1966–30 Jun 1968  
14 Oct 1976–31 Dec 1977  
1 Apr 1978–31 Mar 1980  
1 Jul 1984–30 Jun 1986  
1 Jul 1986–30 Jun 1988  
1 Jul 1988–30 Jun 1990  
20 Aug 1990–11 May 1991  
20 Aug 1990–11 May 1991  
1 Jul 1992–30 Jun 1994  
1 Oct 2000–24 Sep 2002  
1 Oct 2002–30 Sep 2004  
1 Oct 2004–31 Oct 2005  
1 Nov 2005–31 Dec 2006  
1 Jan–31 Dec 2007

Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation  
Libya, 10–16 Apr 1986

Cited in the Orders of the Day, Belgian Army  
6 Jun–30 Sep 1944  
1 Oct–17 Dec 1944  
18 Dec 1944–15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

**EMBLEM**



57 Bombardment Squadron emblem: Upon and over a blue disc a yellow drop bomb palewise, charged with a black cougar, eyed red, tail entwined around wing of bomb and barbed. (Approved, 22 Aug 1942)



On a White disc bordered Red a predominate Red striped Air Force Yellow and Air Force Blue "Mach" chevron in flight diagonally to upper dexter, a Gray-edged White vapor trail curving from upper sinister of chevron to Gray aircraft/missile over to dexter in parallel flight line with chevron. Horizontally at bottom Gray-edged White cloud formations. A Black panther shaded White and Gray, face front, Red eyes and tongue, Yellow extended claws, springing forward from center over vapor trail. **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 tri-colored "Mach" chevron denotes the "Forward Look." The aircraft/missile and the clouds symbolize the unit's air mission. The Black Panther, emblematic of this squadron since 1942, represents stealth, silence, and speed of attack, thus taking a victim quickly and unaware

On a disc White, a predominate Red striped Air Force Yellow and Air Force Blue "Mach"

chevron in flight diagonally to upper dexter, a Gray-edged White vapor trail curving from upper sinister of chevron to Gray aircraft/missile over to dexter in parallel flight line with chevron. Horizontally at bottom Gray-edged White cloud formations. A black panther shaded White and Gray, face front, Red eyes and tongue, Yellow extended claws, springing forward from center over vapor trail, all within a narrow border Red. Attached below the disk, a White scroll edged with a narrow Red border and inscribed "49 FIGHTER SQ" in Red letters. 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 tri-colored "Mach" chevron denotes the "Forward Look." The aircraft/missile and the clouds symbolize the unit's air mission. The Black Panther, emblematic of this squadron since 1942, represents stealth, silence, and speed of attack, thus taking a victim quickly and unaware. (Approved 6 December 1963; modified 30 April 2007)

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Antisubmarine patrols, Mar–Apr 1942. Replacement training unit, 1942–1943. Combat in ETO, 20 Apr 1944–4 May 1945. Not operational, Feb 1972–Jun 1974. Participated in air raid on Tripoli, Libya, 14/15 Apr 1986. Combat in Southwest Asia, Jan–Feb 1991.

Strike Eagles Train With Estonians: The 49 Fighter Squadron at RAF Lakenheath in Britain dispatched several of its F-15E Strike Eagles to participate in Baltic Region Training Event IV Alpha where they worked with Estonian Forward Air Controllers, who will soon deploy to Afghanistan. Lt. Col. John Bunnell, 49 FS commander, said the BRTE exercises help ensure interoperability among NATO and partner nations. "There are many difficulties involved in complex military operations that never show themselves until you exercise in a live environment," said Bunnell, who added that the training was valuable for both the FACs and aircrews. MSgt. Jay Lemely, a Joint Terminal Attack Controller at HQ US Air Forces in Europe, has been working with the Estonian FACs to provide standardization and ensure they can operate with various airpower assets and ground artillery because they will be "the key element tying all these pieces together."

The 48th Bombardment Group (Light) was activated on 15 January 1941 and was assigned four squadrons: the 492nd, 493rd, 494th and 495th.

The first types of aircraft flown during 1941 were the A-20 and B-18, but in September of 1942 the group was redesignated the 48th Bombardment Group (Dive) and now operated a succession of different types including the A-24, A-31, P-39 and P-40. After moving to England in March of 1944 the unit was re-assigned to the Ninth Air Force and began training with the P-47. After the war the unit returned to the States in 1945 and was deactivated.

On 24 September 1956 the first F-100D arrived at Chaumont Air Base. The initial F-100Ds delivered to the unit were 1954 series aircraft in natural metal finish. The squadrons soon began applying their individual colors to their aircraft. The squadron colors were: 492nd Blue, 493rd Yellow and 49 Red. The earliest scheme consisted of the trapezoid shape (centered on the fin) painted in the particular squadron color with a small squadron insignia carried below the windscreen on the port side and a wing insignia in a corresponding position on the starboard side. An F-100D (54-2222) became the Wing Commander's aircraft and carried a Blue, Yellow and Red trapezoid with the 48th Wing Insignia on both sides of the nose in the usual positions. While the 48th Wing was based at Chaumont, special ceremonies took place on 4 July 1956 and the wing had the Statue de la Liberte motto bestowed on it, making it the only USAF Unit to officially have both a numerical and descriptive title.

During 1957 the wing began to receive the 1956 production series of F-100D/Fs and the earlier 1954 versions were

Odyssey Dawn Units Identified: The Air Force has identified units that participated in the attacks against Libyan military targets in the opening salvos of Operation Odyssey Dawn this past weekend. In addition to B-2 stealth bombers from the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., the Air Force sent F-15Es from the 492nd Fighter Squadron and 49 FS at RAF Lakenheath, Britain, as well as F-16CJs from the 480th FS at Spangdahlem AB, Germany. The B-2s struck combat aircraft shelters at Ghardabiya Airfield in Libya, and, based on post-strike photos that the Pentagon displayed, precisely hit them. The F-15Es and F-16CJs attacked ground forces loyal to Libyan ruler Muammar Gadhafi that were advancing on opposition forces in Benghazi and threatening civilians. KC-135s of the 100th Air Refueling Wing at RAF Mildenhall, Britain, refueled the strike aircraft en route to an unnamed forward air base. C-130Js from the 37th Airlift Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany, moved ground equipment and personnel to the forward base, as did theater-based C-17s. Pentagon officials also said EC-130 Commando Solo psychological operations aircraft participated. The Pennsylvania Air National Guard's 193rd Special Operations Wing in Middletown operates these aircraft. 2011

Desert Shield/Desert Storm (August 1990 to February 27th 1991)

On August 2, 1990, the United States began Operation Desert Shield to protect Saudi Arabia following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The first USAFE Wing to deploy from Europe was the 48th TFW from RAF Lakenheath. The initial contingent of 19 aircraft left for Taif on August 25, 1990. It was made up contingents of both the 492nd TFS and the 49 TFS. A second group of 14 followed on September 25, made up mostly of aircraft of the 493rd TFS. The remainder of the 492nd TFS and 49 TFS, which stayed behind at Lakenheath, was reorganized as the 492nd TFS. This new 492nd TFS was deployed with 12 aircraft to Taif on November 29. The next group of 11 aircraft deployed on December 11. A final group of six aircraft transferred to Taif brought the total to 67 aircraft deployed at the start of Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991.

The 48th TFW (Provisional) was established to control the aircraft at Taif. Aircraft and personnel were formed into units at Taif and adopted the following names: 492nd Justice, 493rd Freedom, 49 Liberty, and 495th Independence.



After one mid-1970s NATO exercise in which bad weather had grounded all flights except Upper Heyford's F-111Es, it was decided NATO needed more F-111s. The result was Operation Creek Swing/Ready Switch, which transferred the F-111 Fs to RAF Lakenheath, England. Under Operation Creek Swing/Ready Switch in July and August 1977, the 366th converted from F-111FS to F-111 As. The F-111FS of the 366th TFW transferred to the 48th TFW at RAF Lakenheath. The 48th TFW consisted of three Tactical Fighter Squadrons; the 492nd TFS, 493rd TFS, and the 49 TFS. A fourth squadron, the 495th TFS activated within the 48th TFW in 1977 to provide difference training for aircrews coming from other F-111 models.

The last elements of 48th TFW returned from Taif to Lakenheath during May 1991. The F-111 Fs were transferred to the 27th TFW at Cannon during 1992 as they were replaced at Lakenheath with F-15s. The 492nd and 49 converted to F-15Es in 1992. The 493rd and 495th were inactivated in December 1992. The 493rd was activated with F-15C/D s on January 1, 1994.

70-2397 The aircraft was delivered to the USAF on January 25,1972, and was Pave Tack modified. It was one of the first three delivered to RAF Lakenheath as part of Operation Ready Switch. 70-2397 is seen here on July 16,1983, with the yellow tail cap of the 493rd TFS, 48th TFW. It crashed and was destroyed on April 5, 1989 while assigned to the 49 TFS, 48th TFW. It was flying with the callsign GREEBIE 54 on a RED FLAG mission over the Nellis Range complex. The aircraft slowed to below 200 knots while crossing ridge lines. The aircraft impacted at the crest of one of the ridges, killing the crew, 1Lt Bob Boland and Captain James Gleason. When the aircraft crashed, it had accumulated 1,526 flights and 3,868.0 flight hours.

72-1441 was delivered to the USAF on February 12,1973. It is seen here in markings of the 390th TFS, 366th TFW. It was the first Pave Tack modified aircraft delivered to the 48th TFW. While assigned to the 49 TFS, 48th TFW, the aircraft crashed and was destroyed on February 4,1981, while on approach to RAF Lakenheath, UK. The crew ejected successfully without injuries to the crew. The aircraft had a total of 690 flights and 1,808.5 flight hours when it crashed.

74-0179 was delivered to the USAF on December 4,1975. It is seen here in August 1979, with the red tail cap of the 49 TFS, 48th TFW. It crashed and was destroyed on September 16,1982 at RAF Leuchars while on approach for landing. After a Wheel Well Hot fire light and probable fire, hydraulic pressure was lost and while on final approach, the aircraft entered an uncontrolled left roll. The crew ejected safely, receiving only minor injuries. When the aircraft crashed, it had accumulated 714 flights and 1,745.7 flight hours.

74-0188 was delivered to the USAF on November 22,1976. It is seen here on May 29, 1982, with the red tail cap of the 49 TFS, 48th TFW. It was Pave Tack modified. 74-0188 crashed and was destroyed on April 26,1983 in the North Sea off Germany's Borkun Island. The cause of the loss is still unknown. The crew, Captain Charles Vidas and 1 Lt Steven Groak, was killed. The aircraft had accumulated 572 flights and 1,407.1 flight hours when it crashed.

On 11 August 2000, at 0123L, in Hush House One, a ground run crew was performing an operational check of the number two engine on F-15E S/N 91-0335, assigned to the 49 Fighter Squadron, 48th Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom. Approximately four seconds after the mishap engine operator advanced the number two throttle to afterburner, the aircraft's arresting hook disconnected from the holdback assembly. The aircraft moved rapidly forward and slightly left, penetrating the hush house doors. Immediately after impact the mishap engine operator shut down both engines. The mishap engine operator and the mishap back seat observer safely egressed the aircraft. The mishap ground man and the mishap console operator safely egressed the hush house. The mishap engine operator sustained a minor left shoulder strain and minor cuts to his left hand. These injuries were not permanent and no duty days were lost. No other military or civilian personnel were injured and there were no fatalities. The impact caused extensive damage to the hush house doors. The forward third of the aircraft, both engines, the right external tank, nose gear, engine inlet variable ramps, and canopy were significantly damaged. The accident was caused by failure to properly connect the holdback assembly to the aircraft arresting hook. Five factors substantially contributed to the accident: Failure to Follow Technical Order Procedures/Regulatory Guidance, Habit Pattern Interruption, Channelized Attention, Established Practice, and Training. First, there were eight violations of Technical Orders and other regulatory guidance that set the stage for unsafe operations. Second, the mishap console operator's normal habit of connecting the holdback assembly immediately after positioning the aircraft in the hush house was interrupted by the discovery of munitions on the aircraft. These munitions should have been downloaded before the aircraft was towed to the hush house. Third, as the mishap console operator and mishap ground man connected the holdback assembly to the aircraft arresting hook, their attention was fixated on inserting the quick-disconnect pin rather than on the proper positioning of the arresting hook in the holdback assembly. Fourth, while Technical Orders require the engine run operator to connect the holdback assembly, the established practice at RAF Lakenheath is for someone else, usually the console operator, to connect the holdback device. Fifth, and finally, there were deficiencies in both the formal training of engine operators, and the informal training of console operators.

After achieving victory in Europe in 1945, the 49 returned to Seymour-Johnson Field, North Carolina. However, as tensions with the Soviet Union increased during the early 1950's, the Panthers received order to redeploy to Europe. On 25 June 1952 the squadron was assigned to Chaumont Air Base, France, flying the F-84 Thunderstreak, the F-86 Sabre and the F-100 Super Sabre.

On 1 January 1960, they made another move, this time to RAF Lakenheath, England. To this day, RAF Lakenheath serves as the home airbase for the Mighty Black Panthers.

Although active, from 1972 through 1974, the 49 was not operational and had no personnel, aircraft, or equipment assigned. It returned to operational status when it began flying the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II in 1974. The F-4's lasted until the wing transitioned to the General Dynamics F-111 Aardvark in 1977.

When the call again came to defeat a foreign threat, the Panthers were ready. During Operation Eldorado Canyon in April, 1986, 48th Fighter Wing F-111s attacked targets in Tripoli, Libya to eliminate that country's support and training of international terrorists. Colonel Michael Hoyes, who participated in the mission, recalled:

"A couple of years prior to Eldorado Canyon, while I was attending TLP, an old German Luftwaffe pilot came up to me and said, in reference to World War 2, 'We like it better now because we lost.' This comment will always remain with me. Imagine years after a conflict being happier about losing rather than winning a war! This was not the sentiment going through our minds as we were briefed by General Gabriel, CSAF, and sent on our way. We knew we were doing the right thing. Nevertheless, my crewmate wondered throughout most of the mission when we would be recalled. He didn't think that we had "the nerve" as a nation to really say "No" to terrorism. Then we began our TFR [terrain following radar] descent over the Mediterranean. I know that this is hard for Strike Eagle crews to imagine, with the advantage of a FLIR enhanced HUD or NVGs, but think about descending to low level when you CANNOT "see" outside. It was pitch black at low level over the water during our approach to Libya."

"Our mission became much more challenging when we lost our TFR and both radar altimeters. As we progressed over the Med, I "instructed" my crewmate on how to "hand-fly" the jet using the e-scope. To this day we each give credit to the other for staying alive. The missiles and AAA began their beautiful but deadly glow immediately after Lead's bombs struck. We were number 3, 60 seconds behind. Without an air-to-air radar, we accomplished spacing purely by timing. Once I had to remind my crewmate not to "tap burner", fearing that we would be helping the enemy guide their weapons towards us. Post-flight video review showed a missile "coming up" the Pave Tack line of sight during our target attack."

"It was eerie waiting to hear Nando's [Fernando Ribas-Dominicci] voice, and not hearing it. And we waited for quite some time. Later, we tuned the HF to the Armed Forces Network and heard President Reagan's announcement of our attack even though we were many hours away from England. We didn't know how we would be received. It seemed that, with the exception of Britain, world opinion was against the attack. After a while, prior to the Straits of Gibraltar, over the HF we heard the Navy and Marine Anthems then our USAF song... and we sang along with tears of pride. When we landed, the crew chiefs at our shelter were cheering, and we actually felt as if we had done something special. For a moment it felt like we were in a movie, where the warriors return as heroes."

"Then the news reports hit, questioning America's actions with concerns about reprisal. Suddenly we did not feel as if what we had done was appreciated, though in our hearts, we knew it was right. I lost two friends that night, Nando and Paul Lorrence, but the world gained peace from that particular breed of terrorist... and he has remained 'silent' to this day."

Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 Aug 1990. What to many seemed to be just another localized squabble evolved into one of the United States' largest mobilizations since World War II. The United States, the United Kingdom, and a large coalition of other nations demanded the total

withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory. On 25 August 1990 the 48th Tactical Fighter Wing deployed to Taif, Saudi Arabia. The initial purpose of this deployment was to serve as a defensive force for Saudi Arabia. In recognition for containing Iraqi aggression, the "Defense of Saudi Arabia" campaign streamer was awarded to the 49 Fighter Squadron.

After Iraq failed to comply with a United Nations demand to leave Kuwait, Iraq felt the brunt of a coalition military offensive. The purpose of this offensive, known as Operation Desert Storm, was to forcibly eject Iraq from Kuwait. Major Troy Stone (then 1Lt Stone) recalled:

"We were the first wave on the first night. As we 'fenced-out' crossing from Iraq into Saudi Arabia, I realized the success of my first mission in wartime had been the direct result of every debriefing admonishment, every check-ride critique, and every instructor rebuke I had ever hatefully endured in peacetime. Even though my mind had raced with concern, I had double-checked my target coordinates because I'd been admonished for not double-checking my target coordinated in peacetime. Even though my hands had shook with adrenaline, I had fine-tuned my pod because I'd been critiqued for not fine-tuning my pod in peacetime. And finally, even though my heart had pounded with fear I had updated my INS because I'd been rebuked for not updating my INS in peacetime. As we passed the Saudi-Iraqi border southbound, I realized peacetime lessons learned are truly the foundation of wartime successes."

Liberty Wing F-111s unleashed their lethality using precision-guided and optically guided munitions. Throughout the offensive, wing aircrews participated in a number of operations including bridge busting, airfield destruction, and tank killing. Liberty Wing crews also participated in a number of unique missions. In mid-January the Iraqis damaged an oil pumping station in Kuwait, resulting in thousand of barrels of oil being dumped into the Persian Gulf. This event was considered one of the worst ecological disasters on record. Using GBU-15 television guided munitions, Liberty Wing aircrews stopped the flow of oil by destroying the station's delivery mechanism.

On day 27 of the war the wing flew its only daytime mission. Five F-111Fs, employing GBU-24 bombs, struck five buildings in Kuwait City housing the Iraqi high command. This action severely disrupted Iraq's command and control over its military forces within Kuwait. Another unique mission occurred on 26 February when two F-111Fs dropped the newly developed GBU-28 4,500-pound bombs on the Taji command and control bunker outside of Baghdad. These laser guided weapons, literally made from the barrels of a 14-inch battleship gun and filled with over a ton of high explosive, severely damaged the Taji bunker and damaged Iraq's military machine.

In total, the Liberty Wing flew 1,919 combat sorties during Desert Storm, destroying 2,203 targets. In recognition for their contribution toward victory over Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, "Liberation and Defense of Kuwait" streamer was awarded to the 49 Fighter Squadron.

The unit received its current designation of 49 Fighter Squadron on 30 Nov 1991. It then transitioned to the McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing) F-15E Strike Eagle in 1992 during the midst of the objective wing restructure that reassigned the 49 from the wing to the 48th Operations

Group on 31 Mar 1992, where it remains today.

On 3 Nov 1993, the 49 Fighter Squadron deployed back to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. The mission of the 49 in Operation Provide Comfort expanded from its previous ground attack role to include defensive counter air and reconnaissance missions. The 49 Fighter Squadron employed their air-to-air capability of the Strike Eagle to enforce the "No-Fly" zone and protect high value assets by established air combat patrols in Northern Iraq. The 49 mission also included the protection of the mission coordination center in the town of Zahku in northwestern Iraq. The Strike Eagles were tasked to provide air power in the event of a limited ground threat. In the reconnaissance role, the 49 provided targeting pod video of target sites within the area of responsibility.

The 49 deployed again to Operation Deny Flight in Jun 1995. On the night of 29 Aug, the 49 led NATO's first and largest airstrike against Bosnian Serb Command and Control facilities. The next four weeks would include interdiction strikes against Bosnian Serb integrated air defenses, C3 facilities, ammunition storage sites and bridges. The 49 also were called upon to employ the GBU-15, the first time this weapon was employed in combat by the F-15E. By the end, the 49 achieved the highest success rate of any NATO unit.

In March, 1999, the Panthers deployed to Aviano AB, Italy, to participate in Operation Allied Force. The primary purpose for Operation ALLIED FORCE was to stop the Serbian military repression of Kosovo. During the conflict the 49 Fighter Squadron led 46 percent of all NATO strike missions. Moreover, the Panthers delivered 3.1 million pounds of munitions, and accounted for 38 percent of all NATO precision weapons expended. The 49 also led the way with the first combat use of the Rapid Targeting System, and the first F-15E employment of the GBU-28.

In sep 2006, the Panthers departed RAF Lakenheath for the middle east in support of both OIF and OEF. However, this time the Panthers rode into war aboard a mighty warhorse on steroids, the upgraded F-15E Strike Eagle. Suite 5 and the GBU-39 small diameter bomb (SDB) were tactical capabilities brand new to the combat air forces of the world. For 4 months the Panthers flew out of Al Udeid (nicknamed by aircrew as the "Dirty Deid") providing continuous overwatch of coalition ground forces and the Iraqi government, as well as providing non-traditional intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The enemy did not wait long to challenge the Panther prowess; and, true to the Panther tradition, the enemy did not live long either.

Continued action brought on the first combat drop of the GBU-39 SDB. On 11 Nov 2006, Veterans Day, the Panthers released two GBU-39s on mortar positions. Although not their style of weapon since Panthers prefer lots of fire and flying hot steel, that precise, little bomb did just fine.

In addition to combat missions the Panthers were called upon to provide defensive counter air alert for the Doha Asian Games and to open F-15E ops in Afghanistan. With the completion of the Middle East's largest games, the Panthers loaded a small contingent of aircrew, support

personnel, and equipment onto C-17s and headed for the mountains of Afghanistan. The “Bagram Eagles” validated Strike Eagle ops out of the Afghan air base. In Iraq, however, the work was far from over. Throughout the rest of the deployment, the Panthers vigilantly watched the skies over Baghdad. At the end of Jan 2007, the Panthers waved goodbye to Al Udeid and returned to RAF Lakenheath having expended 19 GBU-12's, 6 GBU-38's, 3 GBU-39's and 2769 rounds of 20 mm ammo.

The demand for the Strike Eagle's presence in Afghanistan continued to grow in 2008. For AEF 3/4, from May through Sep 2008, the Panthers deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan. With eighteen aircraft and well prepared meat-eating black Panthers it didn't take long to draw enemy blood. The Panthers delivered over 540 weapons with an incredible 98.6 % overall hit rate. The Panthers set new AEF standards: flying 30% more sorties and hours, filling 30% more JSTARS, and supporting 30% more TIC's than any squadron previously or since.

On Christmas Eve 2009, the 49 EFS began their deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Equipped with 18 F-15E Strike Eagles, the 49 deployed as part of AEF 03/04, covering 24 December 2009 to 6 May 2010. During this deployment the Panthers flew 1,980 combat sorties and 7,560 combat hours and expended 39 GBU-12's, 56 GBU-31's, 121 GBU-38's and 5,850 rounds of 20 mm ammo.

Airmen and F-15E Strike Eagles of the 49 Fighter Squadron and Aircraft Maintenance Unit at RAF Lakenheath, England, returned home from a deployment to the US Central Command area of operations earlier this month. While deployed, the Panthers flew a total of 1,651 sorties and dropped more than 1,700 bombs targeting ISIS as part of Operation Inherent Resolve. The Strike Eagles returned home Oct. 9, with airmen following Oct. 14. In addition to the fighter squadron and airmen, pilots, special mission aviators, pararescumen, and combat rescue officers from the 56th and 57 Rescue Squadrons, along with maintainers from the 48th Maintenance Group at Lakenheath, also returned from a deployment in late September. 2015

#### Credits

1Lt Bernard L. Kupersmith 1.0, 24 Dec 1944  
1Lt Charles W. Riffle 0.5, 24 Dec 1944  
2Lt Jesse D. Lefforge 0.5, 24 Dec 1944  
1Lt Nelson W. Koscheski 2.0, 27 Dec 1944  
1Lt William R. Johnson 1.0, 27 Dec 1944  
1Lt Kenneth T. Jones 1.0, 27 Dec 1944  
1Lt Garret D. Wakefield 1.0, 27 Dec 1944  
2Lt Willard B. Lenton 1.0,

#### F-84 and F-100

51-707 - Salvaged, bad landing at Dijon Airport, France, 26 JUN 53, no fatalities.  
51-737 - Salvaged, bad landing at Chaumont AB, 16 FEB 53, no fatalities.  
51-760 - Crashed, bad landing at Wheelus AB, Libya, 23 AUG 53, 1 fatality.

51-824 - Crashed, midair collision near Chaumont AB, France, 13 JUL 53, no fatalities, pilot ejected.

51-862 - Salvaged, midair collision near Chaumont AB, France, 13 JUL 53, no fatalities.

51-882 - Crashed, letdown/bad weather, near Chaumont AB, France, 4 DEC 52, 1 fatality.

51-883 - Salvaged, bad weather landing at Furstenfeldbruck AB, West Germany, 9 AUG 52, no fatalities.

51-884 - Crashed, bad weather/emergency landing, at Chaumont AB, France, 14 JUL 53, 1 fatality

51-887 - Crashed, hit ground in simulated attack, near Bitburg AB, West Germany, 23 JUN 53, 1 fatality.

51-889 - Crashed, hit embankment on take-off, Chaumont AB, France, 14 AUG 53, 1 fatality.

51-10397 - Crashed, bad landing/weather, at Chaumont AB, France, 5 APR 53, no fatalities.

52-5279 - Crashed, landed short at Wheelus AB, Libya, 27 MAY 54, 1 fatality.

52-5329 - Salvaged, ran off runway at Wheelus AB, Libya, 26 MAY 54, no fatalities.

52-5353 - Salvaged, bad landing on Wheelus AB, Libya, 6 MAY 54, no fatalities

52-5361 - Crashed, hit target area at Siegenburg Range, West Germany, 14 JULY 54, 1 fatality.

52-5376 - Salvaged, bad landing at Furstenfeldbruck AB, West Germany, 1 MAY 54, no fatalities.

53-1158 - Crashed, fuel exhaustion, 19nm SE of Langres, France, 15 SEP 55, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1165 - Crashed, landing/jet turbulence on Cazaux AB, France, 21 NOV 54, no fatalities.

53-1181 - Crashed, letdown/bad weather, 5nm W of Chaumont AB, France, 8 JUL 55, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1183 - Crashed, take-off, engine and barrier failure, on Sembach AB, W. Germany, 27 APR 56, 1 fatality.

53-1184 - Crashed, engine explosion, near Wheelus AB, Libya, 5 JUL 56, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1203 - Crashed, near Chaumont AB, France, 8 JUL 55, 1 fatality.

53-1205 - Crashed, engine failure at take-off, on Chaumont AB, France, 29 DEC 54, no fatalities.

53-1208 - Crashed, hit by leader's drop tanks, near Sembach AB, W. Germany, 18 DEC 56, no fatalities, ejected.

54-2142 - Crashed on Sidi Slimane AB, Morocco, NOV 56, no fatalities.

54-2153 - Crashed at Chaumont AB, France, APR 57, no fatalities.

54-2155 - Crashed, approach/bad weather, 3nm NE of Hahn AB, West Germany, JUN 57, 1 fatality.

54-2178 - Crashed, fuel/exhaustion, 13nm E of Chaumont AB, France, AUG 58, no fatalities, ejected.

54-2180 - Crashed, bad night landing on Boulhaut AB, Morocco, DEC 56, no fatalities.

54-2181 - Crashed, engine failure, 6nm S of Chaumont AB, France, SEP 57, no fatalities, ejected.

54-2197 - Salvaged, ran off runway on Chaumont AB, France, DEC 58, no fatalities.

54-2209 - Crashed, engine failure, 22nm E of Wheelus AB, Libya, DEC 57, no fatalities, ejected.

54-2225 - Crashed, engine failure, 9nm SW of Boulhaut AB, Morocco, DEC 56, no fatalities, ejected.

54-2232 - Crashed, bad landing at Chaumont AB, France, JULY 57, no fatalities.

54-2255 - Crashed, bad landing at Chaumont AB, France MAY 57, no fatalities.

54-2258 - Crashed on Sidi Slimane AB, French Morocco, JUN 57, no fatalities.

55-3658 - Crashed, landing/bad weather, at Chateauroux AD, Fr, 11 NOV 56, no fatalities.  
56-3202 - Crashed, engine failure, near Wheelus AB, Libya, 5 JULY 56, no fatalities, ejected.  
56-3824 - Crashed, engine explosion near Wheelus AB, Libya, 19 OCT 58, no fatalities, ejected.  
51-16535 - Crashed, hit hill/weather, 1.3nm SE of Herrenwies, W. Germany, 20 MAY 57, 4 fatalities.  
52-9868 - Salvaged, emergency landing at Chaumont AB, France, 22 JAN 59, no fatalities.

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USAF UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 27 May 2023

Updated:

Sources

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