

526th TACTICAL FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

310th Bombardment Squadron (Light), constituted, 13 Jan 1942
Activated, 10 Feb 1942
Redesignated 310th Bombardment Squadron (Dive), 3 Sep 1942
Redesignated 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 23 Aug 1943
Redesignated 526th Fighter Squadron, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 31 Mar 1946
Activated, 20 Aug 1946
Redesignated 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Redesignated 526th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 9 Aug 1954
Redesignated 526th Tactical Fighter Squadron

STATIONS

Will Rogers Field, OK, 10 Feb 1942
Hunter Field, GA, 15 Jun 1942
Key Field, MS, 7 Aug 1942-19 Mar 1943
La Senia, Algeria, 11 May 1943
Mediouna, French Morocco, 15 May 1943
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 11 Jun 1943
Korba, Tunisia, 30 Jun 1943
Gela, Sicily, 20 Jul 1943
Barcelona, Sicily, 1 Sep 1943
Sele Airfield, Italy, 15 Sep 1943
Seretella Airfield, Italy, 5 Oct 1943
Pomigliano, Italy, 12 Oct 1943

Marcianise, Italy, 30 Apr 1944
Ciampino, Italy, 11 Jun 1944
Orbetenlo, Italy, 20 Jun 1944
Poretta, Corsica, 11 Jul 1944
Grosseto, Italy, 16 Sep 1944
Pisa, Italy, 23 Oct 1944
Tantonville, France, 21 Feb 1945
Braunschardt, Germany, 16 Apr 1945
Schweinfurt, Germany, 25 Sep 1945-16 Feb 1946
Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb-31 Mar 1946
Nordholz, Germany, 20 Aug 1946
Lechfeld, Germany, 1 Dec 1946
Bad Kissingen, Germany, 6 Mar 1947
Neubiberg AB, Germany, 12 Jun 1947
Landstuhl AB, Germany, 1 Aug 1952

ASSIGNMENTS

86th Bombardment (later Fighter Bomber; Fighter) Group, 10 Feb 1942-31 Mar 1946
86th Fighter (later Composite; Fighter; Fighter Bomber; Fighter Interceptor) Group, 20 Aug 1946
86th Fighter Interceptor Wing, 8 Mar 1958
86th Air Division, 18 Nov 1960

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-20, 1942
A-24, 1942
A-36, 1942-1944
P-40, 1944
P-47, 1944-1946
P-47, 1946-1950
F-84, 1950-1953
F-86, 1953-1960
F-102A, 1960
F-4E, 1970
F-16C
F-16D
A-20A
A-24A
F-47D
F-84E
A-36A
P-47D

COMMANDERS

LTC Jones E. Bolt, #1952

LTC Steven Teske

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Italy, 25 May 1944

Germany, 20 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

31 Oct 1955-31 Oct 1958

EMBLEM





On a medium blue disc, with white edge and black border, a cloud formation of the second, surmounted by a silhouetted black knight, mounted on a black war horse rampant, the horse caparisoned in white; the knight's right arm raised forward and grasping a bolt of lightning red; holding with his left arm a shield of the last, charged with thirteen white stars, spaced five, two and six; two red streamers, flying from the top of the knight's mailed hood; the slots for his eyes indicated in white. (Approved, 6 Sep 1955)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Black Knights

OPERATIONS

Combat in MTO and ETO, 7 Jul 1943-7 May 1945.

While 526 Fighter Interceptor Squadron lost one TF-102A aircraft on 8 Jun 67, but both pilots safely ejected. 1967

The F-80's were replaced at Wheelus by F-47 Aircraft from the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron. Thus, on 29 April 1950, a new round of training operations was begun in earnest by units of USAFE1's new combat arm, the 2d Air Division. The squadrons spent an average of one month each at the North African location.

It was during this training that the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron earned the dubious distinction of contributing the first casualty in the history of fighter training operations at Wheelus. On 5 May, 1950, First Lieutenant James P. Martz was killed while attempting to bail out of his F-47 aircraft on an air-to-air gunnery mission. His body was recovered from the sea by the combined efforts of Wheelus crash-boat and air rescue helicopter.

The 525th Fighter-Bomber Squadron replaced the 527th on 22 February 1951. This squadron used a non-operational runway and the adjacent area for an aircraft park and billeting area. Maintenance facilities were nearby. A month later, the 525th was replaced by 526th Fighter-

Bomber Squadron, which utilized the same facilities. Upon the departure of the 526th on 1 April 1951, the cycle of training was interrupted due to the shortage of jet fuel at Wheelus. A small detachment of fighter-bomber personnel was left at Wheelus to maintain the operation and tent facilities for future use.

Throughout the rest of 1951, USAFE's F-84's continued to use Wheelus for gunnery training and transition flying. On 1 August the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron arrived to replace the 23d Fighter-Bomber Squadron, which had left for home on 18 July. One of the 526th's F-84's crashed just short of the new Wheelus Field perimeter wall on 15 August after an engine failure. The pilot escaped with minor injuries.

The 526th Fighter Interceptor Squadron began conversion training of squadron pilots at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on 1 August 1960. By November of that year, twenty-nine pilots had completed transition training in the F-102. To help maintain proficiency, an F-102 flight simulator was installed during January of 1960.

The first delivery of F-102s took place on 7 June 1960 when a flight of three F-102As were delivered from Saint-Nazaire, France. Over the next six months a total of twenty-nine F-102s were flown in, with the last two arriving on 2 December 1960.

By early October all the squadron's pilots had completed transition training and the unit began full scale combat crew training. At this point weather problems began to develop as the central European winter weather pattern set in. On top of that, the base commander announced that the runway would close for repairs. In order to meet their training requirements, the squadron requested and received authorization for a large scale deployment to Spain.

From 28 September until 17 October 1960, fourteen aircraft were deployed to Torrejon Air Base, Spain. The unit's TF-102A (54-1364) was sent to Wheelus Air Base. The squadron's run of hard luck continued and normally sunny Torrejon suffered some of the worse weather it had seen all year, with high winds, thunderstorms and heavy rain showers. During the second week the weather improved and the 526th flew 120 sorties. As a result, the deployment was a complete success. On 15 November 1960 the 526th FIS assumed alert status with the F-102.

The unit made a number of deployments to Wheelus Air Base for weapons training. From 20 August to 1 September 1961 two flights of six aircraft each deployed and during August of 1962 a number of aircraft were once again deployed to Wheelus where they set a record of eleven hits of eleven missiles fired on a single day.

From 14 February 1963 to 1 June 1964 two F-102As of the AFSC were assigned to the 526th FIS to assist in the conversion of the GCI sites from the manual plotting and tracking equipment to the 412-L semi-automatic Air Weapons Control System. The two aircraft were administratively assigned to the 526th for maintenance and operational control.

The 526th FIS set a USAFE flight hours record during 1963. Their total of 7,400 hours was much higher than any other European F-102 squadron. During July, August and September of 1963, the squadron logged 1,976 hours, a ninety-day record for USAFE F-102 units. Flying time is allocated to an Air Division in much the same as its yearly budget of operating money. The time is then divided up among Division's squadrons. If a unit meets or exceeds its allowed flying time, it may be given flying time from other units that have been unable to meet their commitments because of weather, main-tenance problems or other operational factors.

In late March 1964, CAPT Richard Carter distinguished himself by expertly handling a disabled F-102A. Just as he was taking off, CAPT Carter realized that the F-102 had blown a tire. Continued his climb he left the landing gear extended and had his wingman check for damage. Once the blown tire was confirmed, CAPT Carter circled the field burning down some 6,000 pounds of fuel to lower the aircraft's landing weight. Once down to the proper weight, he lowered his field arrestor hook and engaged the BAK-9 barrier cable at the approach end of the runway. For the landing, Carter was awarded the USAFE "Well Done" Award.

During October of 1964, CAPT Charles Monahan of the 526th received a USAFE "Well Done" Award for a safe landing in an almost uncontrollable F-102A. The aircraft had the throttle linkage fail in flight. CAPT Monahan manipulated the linkage with a pencil and his finger tips, while guiding another aircraft down, the second aircraft had experienced radio failure and was following Monahan down on the GCA approach. The pilot of the second F-102 was never aware of the throttle problem experienced by Monahan.

During April of 1965 the 526th made training deployments to two other NATO bases. Six F-102s were flown to Erding Air Base near Munich early in the month. Six other Delta Daggers were deployed at the end of April to Creil Air Base in France.

Probably the greatest operational hazard faced by F-102 units in the central European area was the weather and historical reports showed that Ramstein AB had the worse weather, in terms of ceilings and visibility, than any other base. As a result, the 526th routinely deployed aircraft to Spain during the winter months with deployments being made during February 1966, December 1966 and January 1967.

To keep the pilots combat ready and to select the squadron's flight and pilot of the month, the 526th FIS initiated a monthly competition. The day long tournament began with the participating crews receiving their briefing, special instructions and flight plans in the squadron crew briefing room. Each participating flight had selected four pilots for the competition.

The objective of the exercise was to determine how quickly each competing flight completed a successful intercept of a "target" aircraft. The "target" was another F-102 from the squadron, usually flown by the squadron commander COL H.B. Graham. After the "target" was positioned, a scramble was sounded over the unit "bull-horn." The pilots ran to their fighters and were airborne in a matter of minutes. The target flew at a predetermined altitude, usually 45,000 feet. Once airborne, the interceptors searched out the target with their radar and set up a climbing

intercept starting at 40,000 feet. The F-102s climbed up to the target to complete the intercept. The intercept was recorded electronically on magnetic tape which was played back to the judges on the ground to determine if the interceptors had scored a kill. If the pilot kept the target within the missile release circle on his radar screen for two seconds, he scored three points for the intercept.

The squadron's missile loading teams participated in the USAFE/LOADEO Competitions from 1965 until 1969. They won the competition in July of 1967, placing first in the F-102 category and also won as the overall competition winner with the highest total team points (5.037 out of a possible 6.000). In the NATO/ AFCENT Air Defense Competition the squadron participated as part of a team made up of pilots from the 496th, 525th and 526th Fighter Interceptor Squadrons. They represented Sector 3 during September of 1965 and again in June of 1966 and May of 1969.

During the autumn of 1963, the Red-White-Red-White sunburst fin markings were removed being replaced by plain Gray fins with the squadron insignia being carried on port side and the 86th AD insignia on the starboard side. The 526th had a number of aircraft painted with commander's stripes, probably because the squadron played host to six high ranking pilots from higher headquarters who maintained their F-102 proficiency by using 526th aircraft. These aircraft usually carried Red-White-Red stripes around the fuselage behind the cockpit.

The 526th suffered their share of accidents and incidents. On 6 January 1961, an F-102 (56-1239) of the 526th FIS crashed five miles short of the runway of Toul-Rossieres AB, France.

Another F-102A (56-1235) was lost near Illersheim Army Airfield, Germany, on 5 March 1963.

After an engine explosion and fire, the unit's TF-102A (55-4059) crashed at Ramstein on 8 June 1967. The aircraft had been on a visit at Hahn Air Base and made a routine departure. At 12,000 feet a severe explosion occurred and the warning lights in the cockpit came on for the AC/DC generator and boost pumps. A short time later the fire warning light came on with a steady glow. Faced with a possible explosion, the pilots decided to eject. The Deuce continued a slow roll into a split-S and crashed at the airfield in a near vertical dive.

Two other aircraft were lost including 56-1234 which crashed on 5 March 1968. The aircraft struck a house about a mile southeast of Bobesheim, Germany; the pilot parachuted to safety.

On 14 July 1969, another F-102A (56-1237) crashed thirty-five miles from Sembach AB, near the village of Ingweiler, France. The aircraft was part of a flight of three and had collided with his wingman (56-1263). Luckily the second F-102 was only slightly damaged.

Due to a faulty latch system, the unit's TF-102A (54-1364) lost its canopy during flight on 9 January 1964. At that time there was only one spare TF-102A canopy available in the entire Air Force. Unfortunately, it was in a PACAF squadron. The 526th was determined to have a higher priority for the canopy, so it was sent from PACAF to Germany, taking some two months to

arrive.

The last operational mission of a USAFE F-102 was made on 1 April 1970 by a flight of four Delta Daggers of the 526th FIS. The aircraft were piloted by MAJs Lelon Rousey and Hugh Davis along with CAPTs Kurt Anderson and Richard McGlumphy. These four pilots had compiled a total of more than 3,200 hours in the F-102 between them.

The first group of F-102s left Ramstein Air Base on 15 April 1970, followed by a second group of fourteen F-102s on 16 April 1970. These flights ended the service of the Convair F-102 Delta Dagger in USAFE. Other Delta Daggers were seen in Europe; these aircraft were visitors belonging to the 57th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, an Air Defense Command unit based at Keflavik, Iceland.

15 April 1981 An Air Force pilot mistakenly shoots down an F-4E 72-1486, of the 526th Tactical Fighter Squadron, TDY from Ramstein Air Base, West Germany on WSEP training, during a training mission over the Gulf of Mexico with an AIM-9 Sidewinder missile. The two-man crew, Capt. M. R. Dixon and Captain Charles G. Sallee, ejected from the burning F-4 and was rescued quickly. The jets were about 40 minutes into their flight. The Air Force blamed the mishap on inadequate briefing, a failure on behalf of the crews to follow procedures and the fact that the F-4 and the target plane looked similar.

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 yearbook. Neubibeg AB, Germany. *The 86th Raiders*. Montgomery Publishing Company. London, England. 1952.

Unit history. *Wheelus Field; The Story of the US Air Force in Libya. The Early days 1944-1952*. R. L. Swetzer.

Historical Division Office of Information USAFE. 15 Jan 1965