

31st FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR SQUADRON

LINEAGE

31st Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 22 Dec 1939
Activated, 1 Feb 1940
Redesignated 31st Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942
Inactivated, 25 May 1944
Activated, 19 Aug 1944
Inactivated, 3 Jul 1946
Redesignated 31st Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 11 Feb 1953
Activated, 20 Apr 1953
Inactivated, 18 Aug 1955
Activated, 8 Jun 1956
Inactivated, 8 Oct 1958

STATIONS

Albrook Field, CZ, 1 Feb 1940
Rio Hato, Panama, 5 Oct 1940
Albrook Field, CZ, 13 Nov 1940
Chorrera, Panama, 9 Dec 1941
Albrook Field, CZ, 23 Dec 1941
Chorrera, Panama, 3 Feb 1942
Albrook Field, CZ, 19 May 1942
Howard Field, CZ, 30 Sep 1942-25 Mar 1944
Lincoln AAFld, NE, 8 Apr-25 May 1944
Palmdale AAFld, CA, 19 Aug 1944
Santa Maria AAFld, CA, 10 Jul 1945
March Field, CA, 6 Dec 1945-3 Jul 1946
Larson AFB, WA, 20 Apr 1953-18 Aug 1955
Wurtsmith AFB, MI, 8 Jun 1956
Elmendorf AFB, AK, 20 Aug 1957-8 Oct 1958

ASSIGNMENTS

37th Pursuit (later Fighter) Group, 1 Feb 1940
XXVI Fighter Command, 1 Nov 1943
Second Air Force, 8 Apr-25 May 1944
412th Fighter Group, 19 Aug 1944-3 Jul 1946
4702nd Defense Wing, 20 Apr 1953
9th Air Division, 8 Oct 1954-18 Aug 1955

412th Fighter Group, 8 Jun 1956
10th Air Division, 20 Aug 1957-8 Oct 1958

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-26, 1940-1942
P-40, 1941-1944
P-39, 1942-1944
A-25, 1944
P-38, 1944
A-24, 1944-1945
P-63, 1944-194
YP/P-59A, 1944-1945
XP-80, 1944-1945
P-51, 1945-1946
P-80, 1945-1946
F-86D, 1953-195
F-102A, 1956-1958

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

1st. Lt. John R. Kelly 1 Feb 40-ao Jun 40
LTC R. O. Heatly, #1954

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

None

EMBLEM

A caricatured brown fox, standing on a small white cloud formation, outlined light blue, wearing red trousers, yellow vest, black and gray full dress coat, blue muffler about the neck, marked with three light blue stars, and yellow goggles, lenses light blue; one eye closed and the other sighted down barrel of blue revolver with cork in muzzle, held in left forepaw. (Approved, 24 Aug 1943.)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Another of the original squadrons of the 37th Pursuit Group, this unit was originally organized at Albrook on 1 February 1940 as the 31st Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor). Its founding was anything but auspicious, its personnel consisting of a First Lieutenant (the Squadron Commander), two Second Lieutenants and 108 enlisted ranks! The unit consisted of five Boeing P-26A's (33-33, Squadron #94, 33-44/"96", 33-1357 "93", 33-125/"61?", and 33-119/"65"), two Northrop A-17's (including s/n 35-140) and two North American BC-1's (including s/n 38-357/"90" and 38-361). The A-17's and one of the BC-1 's were transferred out by 16 March 1940, and were replaced by two more P-26A's (apparently s/n 33-125/"61" and 33-32).

training was carried out on the tired P-26's, and the unit was moved from Albrook to Rio Hato in early October 1940 (where the unit's personnel helped the 9th Bomb Group build the base camp), in July 1941, the Squadron happily started re-equipping with new Curtiss P-40C's (including 41-13486 and 41-13415) and these, in turn, were replaced for the most part by P-40E's starting in November of the same year. The Squadron lost its last BC-1 to HHS, 37th PG in January 1941.

On 9 December 1941, following the Japanese attack, the Squadron was moved in closer to the Canal than Rio Hato, to La Chorrera where it shared the field with its sister unit, the 30th PS (I) with eight P-40C's and but one of the promised P-40E's and, on the 23rd, moved right in to Albrook once again.

By February 1942, the unit was back at La Chorrera #1 (moving to #2 by 18 May) and, with seven P-40C's and one P-40E, had 11 pilots, of whom five had more than 12 months experience. The unit was operating at the time as an element of the Panama Interceptor Command (PIC).

On 19 May 1942, the unit moved back to Albrook again and, in the same month, suffered its first of a number of personnel losses when 1LT Bernard D. Donis went missing on a flight near Rio Sajalissas, Panama. He was never found. On the 15th of May, the designation was changed to 31st Fighter Squadron.

In August, as new personnel joined the Squadron, the need for an check-ride aircraft became apparent, and, the Squadron was once again in custody of one of the old BC-1's it had started life with in 1940! The Squadron also received a Stinson L-1 at this juncture as well as a Piper L-4A, although the latter is said to have soon gone "to a watery grave."

In September 1942, the unit moved from Albrook to Howard Field and, in November, started to convert from the beloved P-40's to Bell P-39D's, a move not well received in the unit. In December, "E" Flight was moved to San Jose, Costa Rica (it had operated there previously, from 18 August 1942), where it was almost immediately redesignated as "E" Flight, 53rd Fighter Squadron.

The new year saw yet another move for the by now nomadic unit when, on 21 February, the move was made with all 14 aircraft on hand from Howard back to its old digs at Chorrera once again, although this was short-lived, as "E" and "F" Flights moved from Howard to Pocrí on 13 June! These two flights were consolidated into a large "E" Flight at Pocrí on 16 August.

The Squadron's transition onto P-39D's was short-lived, and, by October 1943, had converted to P-39N's (including 42-18434) and the main body was once again ensconced at Howard. By the end of the year, the Squadron had 18 P-39's and one P-40 and had been subordinated to the XXVI Fighter Command directly.

The unit served out the remainder of its Panama tour at Howard until inactivation on 25 May 1944, at which time it was transferred back to the U.S.

A 31st Pursuit Squadron Curtiss P-40C, s/n 41-13468/"91" sits at ready in its revetment area at La Joya No.1 in December 1942. The aircraft was later lost at the hands of 1LTR. E. Dunbar while flying out of La Joya on 4 July 1943 in bad weather (USAF 6325AC)

While the bomber forces had been deployed to outlying bases, the units of the Caribbean Interceptor Command were also dispersed. These measures, all taken in the days immediately following 7 December, included sending the 28th Pursuit Squadron with its nine airworthy aircraft to the Panama National Airport at Paitilla Point, where revetments for the aircraft were hastily erected on the relatively open and well-known field. The 30th and 31st Pursuit Squadrons, each with nine aircraft, were dispatched to Chorrera, where their aircraft were hidden amongst the jungle growth while revetments were being built.

On the Atlantic side, the 52nd Pursuit Squadron and Hq Sq, 32nd Pursuit Group with 10 aircraft, were also moved into dispersed positions, and revetments were also building. The other two squadrons of this group, the 51st and 53rd, with 10 aircraft each, were at the new Howard Field, which was still under construction, and were also dispersed amongst the mangrove swamps to the west of the runway while revetments were built.

31st F-I Squadron: activated 20 Apr 53 at Larson AFB, WA, as the 4702nd Defense Wing, flying F-86D acft; transferred to 9th AD 8 Oct 54; inactivated 18 Aug 55 LAW Project Arrow; reactivated 8 Jun 56 at Wurtsmith AFB, MI, and assigned to 412th Ftr Group (AD) with F-102A acft; transferred to AAC in Aug 57.

412 FG was established at Muroc AAF on 30 November 1943 as the USAAF's - in fact, America's - premier jet airplane equipped fighter unit. As part of the 4th Air Force, the 412th FG

formed three squadrons: the 29th Fighter Squadron (FS) - "Gamecocks"; 31st FS - "Foxes"; and the 445th FS. Respectively, these three squadrons would go on to operate P-59As and P-59Bs.

In June 1944, the 412th FG had subsequently moved to Palmdale, California, which is some 30 miles from Muroc. They then moved north-ward to Bakersfield, California, in late 1944, and in July 1945, westward to Santa Maria, California.

It was during the late 1944-to-late 1945 time period that several additional squadrons were attached to the 412th FG. These were comprised of the 361st FS, 615th Air Engineering Squadron (AES), and the 624th Air Material Squadron (AMS). Another lesser-known P-59 unit - the 440th Army Air force Base Unit, a training squadron - was in operation at Santa Maria by late June 1945.

March AAF (now March AFB), located some nine miles southeast of Riverside, California was the next home of the 412th FG. Beginning in January 1946, with the inactivation of Santa Maria, most of the 412th FG's P-59s were ferried to March Field. The P-59s that did not move to March Field with the 412th were instead flown to a number of other locations within the U.S. Namely, to be used as A&P Mechanic teaching aids at various colleges, after which they were scrapped. By July 1946, except for the one that had been retained for display (P-59A, 44-22614) at the March Field Museum, the P-59s at March Field were all gone - the 412th having completed its transition to P-80s Shooting Stars.

31st Pursuit Squadron (37th Pursuit Group)
 HQ-Not organized 1939-40
 Albrook Field, CZ, 1940
 Rio Hato Airfield, CZ, 1940
 Albrook Field, CZ, 1940-41

Constituted in the Regular Army on 22 December 1939 and assigned to the 37th Pursuit Group. Activated on 1 February 1940 at Albrook Field, CZ. Transferred on 5 October 1940 to Rio Hato Airfield, CZ. Transferred on 13 November 1940 to Albrook Field, CZ. Location 7 December 1941—Albrook Field, CZ. Status: Inactivated on 8 October 1953 as the 31st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Elmendorf A.F.B., TA.

430113	P-39D	41-6814	31FS	37FG		TOAEF	Nicolai, Adam E	Howard Fld
430114	P-39D	41-7025	31FS	37FG		LAC	Shapiro, Leonard (NMI)	Howard Fld
430210	P-39D	41-7021	31FS	37FG		LAC	Long, John D	Howard Fld
430228	P-39D	41-6973	31FS	37FG		TAC	Hansen, Albert K	Howard Fld
430303	P-39D	41-6931	31FS	37FG		MAC	Gilliam, Julian (NMI)	Howard Fld

430303	P-39D	41-6931	31FS	37FG		MAC	Gilliam, Julian (NMI)	Howard Fld
430429	P-39D	41-7088	31FS	37FG		BMAC	Gale, Albert E Jr	Aguadulce/ 25mi SW
430429	P-39D	41-7016	31FS	37FG		KMAC	Buffum, John H	Aguadulce/ 25mi SW
430610	P-39N	42-18447	31FS	37FG		LACW	Mills, Clarence H	Pedasi [LA- 9]
430625	P-39N	42-18427	31FS	37FG		TAC	Petersen, Adolf F	Howard Fld
430626	P-39N	42-18443	31FS	37FG		CR	Langolf, Alexander C	San Carlos/8mi SE
430729	P-39N	42-18448	31FS	37FG		CBL	Kelly, Gerald D	Rio Hato/ 20mi W
430815	L-4A	42-38442	31FS	37FG		FLEF	Porter, Robert H	LA-9/ 2mi SW
431018	P-39N	42-18428	31FS	37FG		DTCMF	Schramm, Arthur F	France Fld/10mi N
431114	BC-1	38-359	31FS	37FS		LAC	Coyle, Robert J	Howard Fld
431127	P-39N	42-4991	31FS	26FG		BOEF	Lee, Eugene C	Chame/ 5mi SE
431207	P-39N	42-18452	31FS			MACB	Finley, Samuel A	Howard Fld
431209	P-39N	42-18455	31FS			MAC	Morris, Robert H	Howard Fld
431211	P-39N	42-18436	31FS	26FG		LAC	Sorenson, Sherard A	Howard Fld
440112	P-39N	42-18424	31FS			LAC	Morrison, Roger L	Pocri
440913	P-63A	42-69089	31FS	412FG	Palmdale AAF, Palmdale, CA	CRSSP	Neff, Rowan N	Edge of Field, Palmdale AAF, Palmdale, CA
441027	P-38G	42-12842	31FS	412FG	Palmdale AAF, Palmdale, CA	TOAEF	Wallace, William E	Palmdale AAF, Palmdale, CA

441114	P-59A	44-22619	31FS	412FG	Bakersfield AAB, CA	BOoG	Tunker, Charles	3M W Dayton, OH
441115	RA-24B	42-54827	31FS	412FG	Palmdale AAF, CA	TAC	Webber, Don L	Palmdale AAF, CA
450619	P-51D	44-84742	31FS	412FG	Palmdale AAF, CA	LACGL	Stay, Donald H	Palmdale AAF, CA
450622	P-47N	44-87937	31FS	413FG		TAC	Carrier, Clyde A	
451010	P-59B	44-22646	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF	CBLMF	Wadsworth, Edson M	Santa Maria AAF
451012	P-51D	44-84765	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	CRLW	Stowe, Billy G	3M S Myrtle Creek, CA
451012	P-51D	44-84775	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	CRLW	Schultz, Donald M	3M S Myrtle Creek, CA
451026	P-51D	44-84761	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	CRLMF	Berry, Gerald O	Bloomsburg Airport, PA
451109	P-51D	44-84753	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	LAC	Eckman, Robert L	Santa Maria AAF, CA
451120	P-51D	44-84770	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	MAC	Gadsworth, Edson M	Santa Maria AAF, CA
451120	P-51D	44-74789	31FS	412FG	Santa Maria AAF, CA	MAC	Brundette, Jack M	Santa Maria AAF, CA
460208	P-80A	44-85057	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	LACEF	Vogan, Glenn L	March Fld
460311	P-80A	44-85058	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	CBL	Voss, Clyde K	March Fld
460317	C-45F	43-35895	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	KCR	Murphy, Thomas H	March Fld/ 2mi N
460418	P-80A	44-85035	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	TOA	Barber, Rex T	Hill Fld
460426	P-80A-1	44-85078	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	BOEF	Eckman, Robert L	Haws/ 2mi N
460523	P-80A	44-85158	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	LAC	Bing, Andrew J	March Fld
460701	P-80A	44-85063	31FS	412FG	March Fld, CA	LAC	Woodfield, John M	March Fld

420611	P-40E	40-574	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOAEF	Dawson, Gerard	Albrook Field, CZ
420710	P-40E	40-640	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	LACNU	Mitchell, Raymond M Jr	Albrook Field, CZ
420815	P-40E	40-630	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOAEF	Boylan, Bruce G	Rio Hato, PAN
420816	P-40E	40-614	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOA	Burnett Ralph E	Panama Bay, CZ
420901	P-40C	41-13430	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOAEF	Lunken, Edmund P	Albrook Field, CZ
420907	P-40C	41-13487	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	KSSPCR	Gunnell, Wayne L	10 mi Sw of Chame Field, PAN
420916	P-40C	41-13503	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	TACNU	Miller, Bernard	Albrook Field, CZ
420920	BC-1	38-361	31FS	37FG	Albrook Field, CZ	LAC	Campbell, William V	La Sabana Airport, San Jose, COS
421002	P-40C	41-13461	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	LACGL	Morin, William O	Howard Field, CZ
421002	P-39D	41-6884	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	LAC	Huber, Massey J	Howard Field, CZ
421008	P-39	41-6948	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	FLMF	Newberry, James R	Albrook Field, CZ
421011	P-40C	41-13430	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	LACGL	Boylan, Bruce G	Howard Field, CZ
421012	P-40C	41-13461	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	TOAEF	Morin, William O	Howard Field, CZ
421109	P-40C	41-13435	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	TAC	Finley, Samuel A	Howard Field, CZ
421109	P-40C	41-13507	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	TAC	Long, John D	Howard Field, CZ
421222	P-39D	41-6884	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	KFLEF	Newberry, James R	Howard Field, CZ
421228	P-39D	41-6997	31FS	37FG	Howard Field, CZ	GAC	Jensen, Elmer J	Howard Field, CZ

410109	P-26A	33-32	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	TAC	Duncan, Glenn E.	Albrook Field, CZ
410725	P-40C	41-13415	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOA	Bonawitz, Norval C.	Albrook Field, CZ
420407	P-40C	41-13491	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	TOAEF	Vecchiarelli, Joseph P	Chorrera Field #1, PAN
420419	P-40C	41-13405	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	FLEF	Carlson, William E	Chorrera Point, PAN
420428	P-40C	41-13484	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	LAC	Gally, Alvin T M	La Pena, PAN
420505	P-40E	40-637	31PS	37PG	Albrook Field, CZ	KCR	Davis, Bernard D	Rio Sasalinsas, PAN
380815	P-26A	33-118	31PS		Nichols Field, Rizal, PHI	LAC	Combs, Cecil E	Nichols Field, Rizal, PHI
400615	P-26A	33-44	31PS		Albrook Field, CZ	FLEF	Lobingier, Paul A.	La Chorrera, PAN
400628	P-26A	3-135	31PS		Albrook Field, CZ	FLEFNO	Henry, John B, Jr	Beach, 20 mi NW of Corinto, NIC
400810	P-26A	33-101	31PS		Albrook Field, CZ	BOEF	Henry, John B, Jr	15 mi E of Rio Hato, PAN
401118	BC-1	38-357	31PS		Albrook Field, CZ	TAC	Slaght, Morley F.	Rio Hato, PAN
401209	P-26A	33-125	31PS		Albrook Field, CZ	LAC	Carney, Jesse R	Albrook Field, CZ

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 24 May 2011

Updated:

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. 25th Air Division (Defense). 1953-1954.