

33 FIGHTER WING



MISSION

The 33 Fighter Wing is a joint graduate flying and maintenance training wing for the F-35A, B, and C, organized under Air Education and Training Command's Nineteenth Air Force. It is an associate unit on Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., an Air Force Materiel Command base.

The 33 FW operates seven squadrons aligned under the Operations and Maintenance Groups. Initially, the 33 OG will comprise four squadrons: the 58th Fighter Squadron, training Air Force pilots with the F-35A CTOL (Conventional Takeoff and Landing) variant; VMFAT-501, training Marine pilots with the F-35B STOVL (Short Takeoff/Vertical Landing) variant; VFA-101, training Navy pilots with the F-35C CV (Carrier Variant); and the 33 Operations Support Squadron. The 33 MXG will comprise three squadrons: the 33 Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, providing flightline maintenance support; the 33 Maintenance Squadron, providing intermediate-level back-shop support; and the 33 Maintenance Operations Squadron, providing maintenance control and other logistics support functions. An additional "School House" Group is being developed to manage the training systems, support centers, classrooms, simulators, and ground training devices.

LINEAGE

33 Fighter Wing established, 15 Oct 1947

Organized, 5 Nov 1947

Redesignated 33 Fighter Interceptor Wing, 20 Jan 1950

Inactivated, 6 Feb 1952

Redesignated 33 Fighter Wing (Air Defense), 14 Sep 1956

Activated, 18 Oct 1956

Inactivated, 18 Aug 1957

Redesignated 33 Tactical Fighter Wing and activated, 9 Feb 1965

Organized, 1 Apr 1965
Redesignated 33 Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Roswell AAFld (later, Walker AFB), NM, 5 Nov 1947
Otis AFB, MA, 16 Nov 1948-6 Feb 1952
Otis AFB, MA, 18 Oct 1956-18 Aug 1957
Eglin AFB, FL, 1 Apr 1965

ASSIGNMENTS

Eighth Air Force, 5 Nov 1947
First Air Force, 1 Dec 1948
Eastern Air Defense Force, 1 Sep 1950-6 Feb 1952
26 Air Division (Defense), 18 Oct 1956
Boston Air Defense Sector, 8 Jan-18 Aug 1957
Tactical Air Command, 9 Feb 1965
836 Air Division, 1 Apr 1965
Ninth Air Force, 30 Jun 1971

ATTACHMENTS

509 Bombardment Wing, Very Heavy, 17 Nov 1947-15 Nov 1948
Eastern Air Defense Force, 10 Nov 1949-31 Aug 1950
Air Division [Defense], 20 Feb 1950-1 Feb 1952
4622 Air Defense Wing [SAGE], 18 Oct 1956-7 Jan 1957

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-51, 1948-1950
F-84, 1948-1950
F-86, 1950-1952
F-94, 1951-1952
F-47, 1951-1952
F-89, 1956-1957
F-94, 1956-1957
F-4, 1965-1979
F-15, 1978

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Joseph C. Smith, 5 Nov 1947 (additional duty)
Col Gwen G. Atkinson, Jan 1948 (additional duty to 16 Nov 1948)
Col Arthur C. Agan Jr., 23 May 1949
Col Harrison R. Thyng, Apr 1951
Col Leon W. Gray, Oct 1951-6 Feb 1952
Col Hilmer C. Nelson, 18 Oct 1956
Col Delbert H. Hahn, May-30 Jun 1957

None (not manned), 1 Jul-18 Aug 1957
None (not manned), 9 Feb-31 Mar 1965
Col David C. Jones, 1 Apr 1965
Col George I. Ruddell, 1 Oct 1965
Col Robert W. Maloy, 26 Aug 1966
Col Abner M. Aust Jr., 12 May 1967
Col Franklin L. Fisher, 15 Jun 1967
Col Richard C. Henry, 30 Sep 1970
Col William E. Skinner, 24 Mar 1972
Col Gordon B. Mickelson, 10 May 1973
Col Donald C. Hanto, 15 Feb 1975
Col David L. Nichols, 29 Apr 1977
Brig Gen Charles R. Hamm, 20 Jul 1979
Col Stanton R. Musser, 21 Apr 1980
Col Jack R. Petry, 22 Jan 1982
Col Robert K. Wagner, 19 Aug 1983
Col George J. Forster, 14 May 1985
Col John P. Jumper, 19 Feb 1987
Col Robert W. Mendell, 19 Jan 1988
Col Rick N. Parsons, 30 May 1989
Col David L. Yates, 25 Aug 1990
Col Richard F. Hardy, 1 Mar 1991
Col Rick N. Parsons, 12 Apr 1991
Col Gregory S. Martin, 2 Aug 1991
Col William R. Looney III, 4 Jun 1993
Col Carrol H. Chandler, 15 May 1995
Col Gary R. Dylewski, 28 Mar 1996
Col Felix Dupre, 3 Oct 1997
Col John T. Brennan, 5 Apr 1999
Col Herbert J. Carlisle, 2 Mar 2001
Col Stanley T. Kresge, 14 Feb 2003
Col Brett Williams, 30 Jul 2004
Col Russell J. Handy, 15 Jun 2006
Col Todd P. Harmer, 4 Jan 2008
Col David A. Hlatky, 1 Oct 2009
Col Andrew J. Toth, 31 Mar 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Grenada, 1983

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1967-30 Jun 1968

1 Jul 1968- 30 Jun 1969

1 Oct 1978-30 April 1980

1 May 1984-30 April 1986

1 Apr 1990-31 Mar 1992

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

Bestowed Honors

Authorized to display honors earned by the 33 Operations Group prior to 5 Nov 1947

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Algeria-French Morocco

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Air Combat, EAME Theater

India-Burma

China Defensive

Central Burma

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation: Central Tunisia, 15 Jan 1943

EMBLEM





33 Fighter Wing emblem: Azure, on a pale wavy Or, a sword point to chief of the field flammant Gules and Argent all within a diminished bordure of the second. (Approved for 33 Group, 21 Feb 1942 and for 33 Fighter Wing, 5 Oct 1965)

MOTTO

FIRE FROM THE CLOUDS

OPERATIONS

The 33 Wing headquarters was not operational and all of its components were detached, Nov 1947- Nov 1948, with the 509th Bombardment Wing at Walker AFB, NM, controlling the wing's tactical units. Headquarters of the 33 Fighter Wing became operational upon movement to Otis AFB, MA, in mid-Nov 1948.

The wing trained to maintain tactical proficiency and participated in exercises and aerial demonstrations Nov 1948-Nov 1949. It assumed an air defense mission in Dec 1949 and provided air defense in the northeastern United States until inactivated in Feb 1952. Once again it provided air defense in the northeastern United States, Oct 1956-Jun 1957, but was non-operational, 1 Jul-18 Aug 1957.

In Apr 1965 the wing activated at Eglin AFB, FL, and embarked on a program of tactical training operations to maintain proficiency. Operated a test support division, Jul 1965-Dec 1967, and a special test squadron, Dec 1967-Apr 1971, in support of tests for weapon systems, aircraft armament and munitions, and tactical procedures of the Tactical Air Warfare Center. The wing also provided F-4 replacement training, 15 Dec 1966-28 Feb 1967.

Through deployment of combat-ready tactical components, with personnel and equipment transferred to PACAF units upon arrival, the wing provided fresh aircraft and aircrews for the forces in Southeast Asia and in Korea.

Entire resources of squadrons were released as follows: 40 TFS, May 1967, Nov 1968, and May 1969; 4 TFS, Jul 1967; and 16 TFS, Oct 1967 and Apr 1969. In all cases except for the 40 in May 1969, the squadrons were immediately remanned and reequipped. The wing also transferred two of its combat-ready squadrons to PACAF, the 25 TFS in May 1968 and the 4 TFS in Apr 1969.

The wing's last combat-ready squadron, the 58 TFS, deployed to Southeast Asia for combat operations from Apr to Oct 1972 and again from Jun to Sep 1973. The wing supported the 4485th Test Squadron of the Tactical Air Warfare Center in weapon systems evaluation program tests, Jan-Dec 1973, and periodically thereafter until Jul 1978. Aircrews ferried F-4Es to Israel in Oct 1973.

The Wing augmented intercept defense forces of the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), 1 Jan 1976-15 Jan 1979 and 4 Jan-5 Apr 1982. While awaiting delivery of F-15s, the 60 FS conducted F-15 mission qualifications training for the 18 TFW, 15 July 1979-30 April 1980.

The wing provided personnel and equipment to fly combat air patrols and air intercept missions for contingency operations in Grenada, Oct-Nov 1983, and Panama, Dec 1989-Jan 1990.

In 1990-91, the wing participated in the thwarting of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The wing distinguished itself by scoring 16 aerial kills, the most of any single unit, including the first kill of the war. In addition to the kills, the 33 accomplished a number of firsts including: the most air-to-air kills, the most double kills and the most sorties and hours flown by any unit in the combat theater. The 33TFW, the only unit whose wing commander scored an air-to-air victory, destroyed the most MiG-29's (a total of five). Following Desert Shield/Storm, the Air Force restructured its forces. Under the new structure the 33 was redesignated the 33 Fighter Wing. The same year, it became the first fighter wing to bring the AIM-20 Advance Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) into full combat capable service.

From 1992-2002, continued to deploy aircraft and personnel to Saudi Arabia, Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Jamaica, Iceland, Italy, and Puerto Rico and participated in operations SOUTHERN WATCH, CORONET MACAW; RESTORE HOPE, SUPPORT JUSTICE IV; UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.

In 1994, the 33 participated in Operation Uphold Democracy, providing support to the recognized government in Haiti. The same year, the wing participated in Operation Vigilant Warrior, the close monitoring of Saddam Hussein in a perceived strengthening of force.

It lost 13 members in the bombing of Khobar Towers, Saudi Arabia on 25 Jun 1996.

The Air Force's 33 Fighter Wing at Eglin AFB, Fla., currently is under command of Marine Corps Col. Arthur Tomassetti while Air Force Col. David Hlatky attends a professional military education course. Tomassetti, who was formerly the lead government pilot for the X-35 test

team, is the vice commander for the 33 FW, which serves as the joint service unit slated to train US and international pilots on the F-35 strike fighter. Hlatky called Tomassetti a "superior officer" and said, "The 33 Wing is a joint organization, so it should be no surprise that the vice commander takes the helm, regardless of service affiliation." 2009/2010

The F-35 schoolhouse at Eglin AFB, Fla., last week completed its 2,000th training sortie since flight operations commenced there with the Air Force's F-35A model in March 2012. Marine Corps Maj. Adam Levine, instructor pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron-501 (VMFAT-501), flew the milestone sortie on Aug. 13 in an F-35B variant. "[This] sortie highlights the accomplishments of the entire F-35 airpower team at Eglin ... and moves us one step closer to the aircraft's initial warfighting capability," said Col. Todd Canterbury, commander of the 33 Fighter Wing, which oversees the schoolhouse. On the following day, the schoolhouse marked another milestone, as Navy Lt. Cdr. Christopher Tabert of Strike Fighter Squadron 101 (VFA-101) completed the first local sortie with the F-35C version. The schoolhouse continues to ramp up training activities, with all 24 of the 58th Fighter Squadron's F-35As expected to be in place next spring, said base officials. The schoolhouse will eventually operate a fleet of 59 F-35s in all three configurations.

USAF Unit Histories

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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 yearbook. *26th Air Division, Defense. 1956.*