

## 53 TEST AND EVALUATION GROUP



### MISSION

The 53 Test and Evaluation Group execute operational test, evaluation and tactics development for America's fighter and bomber aircraft. Aircraft assigned to the group include test-configured F-15, F-15E, F-16, A-10, HH-60 and F-22 aircraft with flying hours assigned to the B-1, B-2 and B-52 aircraft. The group also conducts operational test and evaluation of the Global Hawk and Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, and soon will begin testing of the Airborne Laser System.

The 53 Test and Evaluation Group is made up of seven squadrons, two direct-reporting detachments, a named flight, and an operating location across nine stateside locations. The 53d TEG is responsible for the overall management of the wing's flying activities at Barksdale, Beale, Dyess, Edwards, Eglin, Nellis, Whiteman, and Creech Air Force bases. Members of the group execute operational test and evaluation and tactics development and evaluation projects for Headquarters Air Combat Command.

Detachment 2 of the 53 TEG at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., executes Force Development Evaluation of the U-2 and RQ-4 High Altitude weapon systems. They provide experienced operation, maintenance, engineering, and analysis personnel who plan and conduct ground and flight tests, analyze, evaluate, and report on the effectiveness, suitability and all related logistics, support, and training issues. Results and conclusions support DoD deployment and employment decisions.

Detachment 3 of the 53 TEG at Nellis AFB is the representative for ACC interests in FME testing with AFMC. The detachment's primary mission is to ensure USAF combat aircrews are prepared to fight with the latest knowledge available through FME. It maintains an active involvement

with AFMC and other agencies such as the National Air Intelligence Center and the Adversary Tactics Group for data analysis and to ensure FME test results are reported to the CAF. In addition, Detachment 3 is the liaison for FME training conducted on the Nellis Range Complex, providing procedures and acting as subject matter experts on key systems.

The Combat Search and Rescue Combined Test Force is located at Nellis AFB and is one of only two integrated test units in the 53 WG. The CSAR CTF integrates Developmental Test and Operational Test units into a Combined Test Force comprised of personnel and resources from both AFMC and ACC. A benchmark in testing efforts, the CSAR CTF strives to shorten the acquisition process by integrating both OT and DT aircrew into as many tests as possible which allows for continuity and faster return time on test articles and TTPs. The CSAR CTF is currently the Responsible Test Organization for both HH-60G Pavehawk aircraft and the Guardian Angel Weapons System. The CSAR CTF is currently working to acquire HC-130 test resources and eventually the addition of the CSAR-X program will be added to the CSAR CTF lineup thus completing the effort to align all Combat Search and Rescue Mission Areas into one organization.

The 53 TEG also has an A-10 liaison office at the Air National Guard Air Force Reserve Test Center located in Tucson, Ariz., on the facilities of the 162d Fighter Wing, Air National Guard. It is one of three principal ACC organizations responsible for planning, coordinating and accomplishing OT&E and TD&E. AATC's mission is operational testing of Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve unique systems, subsystems, modifications, tactics, techniques and procedures as well as other systems for which AATC has been designated as the lead test center. The goal of AATC is to improve the combat capability of the "mature" weapons systems flown by the Guard and Reserve through the use of low cost, off-the-shelf technologies which can be fielded in a timely manner. AATC initiatives include the Situation Awareness Data Link, night vision compatible aircraft lighting components, and the Electronic Warfare Management System.

#### **LINEAGE**

79 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) established, 13 Jan 1942  
Redesignated 79 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) (Twin-Engine), 31 Jan 1942  
Activated, 9 Feb 1942  
Redesignated 79 Fighter Group (Twin-Engine), 15 May 1942  
Redesignated 79 Fighter Group, 10 Sep 1942  
Inactivated, 15 Jul 1947  
Redesignated 79 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955  
Activated, 18 Aug 1955  
Inactivated, 1 Mar 1960  
Redesignated 79 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985

4443 Test and Evaluation Group established and activated, 1 Jul 1988

79 Tactical Fighter Group and 4443 Test and Evaluation Group consolidated and redesignated

79 Test and Evaluation Group, 1 Dec 1991

Inactivated, 20 Nov 1998

53 Test and Evaluation Group established, 1 Nov 1998

Activated, 20 Nov 1998

79 Test and Evaluation Group and 53 Test and Evaluation Group consolidated, 25 Jul 2000.

Consolidated group designated 53 Test and Evaluation Group.

## **STATIONS**

Dale Mabry Field, FL, 9 Feb 1942

Morris Field, NC, 28 Apr 1942

Hillsgrove, RI, 15 Jun 1942

Bedford, MA, 2 Jul 1942-28 Sep 1942

Egypt, 18 Nov 1942

Libya, 25 Jan 1943

Tunisia, 12 Mar 1943

Sicily, 16 Jul 1943

Southern Italy, 15 Sep 1943

Foggia, Italy, 9 Oct 1943

Madna Airfield, Italy, 19 Nov 1943

Capodichino, Italy, 17 Jan 1944

Pomigliano, Italy, 1 May 1944

Corsica, 11 Jun 1944

Southern France, 25 Aug 1944

Iesi, Italy, 3 Oct 1944

Fano, Italy, 5 Dec 1944

Cesenatico, Italy, 20 Mar 1945

Horshing, Austria, 22 Jul 1945-25 Jun 1947

Langley Field, VA, 25 Jun-15 Jul 1947

Youngstown Muni Aprt, OH, 18 Aug 1955-1 Mar 1960

Eglin AFB, FL, 1 Jul 1988

Nellis AFB, NV, 17 Jun 1999

Nellis AFB, NV

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Third Air Force, 9 Feb 1942

I Fighter Command, 22 Jun 1942

Ninth Air Force, Nov 1942

IX Fighter Command, 24 Feb 1943

Twelfth Air Force, 22 Aug 1943

XII Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1943

57 Bombardment Wing, 1 Nov 1943

XII Fighter Command, 20 Sep 1944  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Oct 1944  
70 Fighter Wing, 31 Jul 1945  
Tactical Air Command, 25 Jun-15 Jul 1947  
4708 Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955  
30 Air Division, 8 Jul 1956  
Detroit Air Defense Sector, 1 Apr 1959-1 Mar 1960  
USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center (later, USAF Air Warfare Center; 53 Wing), 1 Jul 1988

### **ATTACHMENTS**

7 Wing South African Air Force, 21 Feb 1943-2 Jun 1943  
XII Air Support Command, 2-14 Jun 1943  
7 Wing, South African Air Force, 14 Jun-21 Aug 1943  
Northwest African Tactical Air Force  
64 Fighter Wing, 18 Jan-10 Feb 1944 and 27 Feb-20 Apr 1944  
87 Fighter Wing, 11 Jun-19 Sep 1944  
64 Fighter Wing, 20-30 Sep 1944  
Desert Air Force, 1 Oct 1944-9 May 1945  
XXII Tactical Air Command, 12 May-7 Jun 1945

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-40, 1942-1944  
P-47, 1944-1947  
F-86, 1953-1957  
F-102, 1957-1960  
F-4, 1988-1994  
A-10, 1988  
F-15, 1988  
EF-111, 1988-1996  
F-16, 1988  
F-117, 1993  
HH-60, 1997

### **COMMANDERS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Thomas G. Mitchell, 11 Feb 1942  
Lt Col J. Stanley Holtner, 17 Feb 1942  
Lt Col Peter McGoldrick, Jul 1942  
Col Earl E. Bates, Nov 1942  
Col Charles W. Stark, Apr 1944  
Lt Col Melvin J. Neilson, May 1944  
Col Gladwyn E. Pinkston, 28 Nov 1944  
Lt Col John F. Martin, 17 May 1945  
Col German P. Culver, May 1946  
Lt Col Bascom A. Brooks, 4 Feb 1947

Lt Col John M. Thacker, Apr 1947-unkn  
Col Benjamin H. Emmert Jr., 1955  
Col Harley S. Vaughn, Jul 1956  
Col Dale S. Sweat, 20 Jul 1958  
Lt Col Talmadge J. Denton, 12 Feb-1 Mar 1960  
Col Ross L. Smith, 1 Jul 1988  
Col David C. Ladd, 31 Jul 1990  
Col David Hamilton, 28 Aug 1992  
Col Nicholas J. Holoviak, 21 Nov 1994  
Unkn, Dec 1996-24 Jul 1997  
Col Gregory J. Ihde, 25 Jul 1997  
Col Joseph Reynes Jr., 17 Jun 1999  
Col Craig A. Franklin, 13 Jul 2001

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Egypt-Libya  
Tunisia  
Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Po Valley  
Rhineland  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
North Africa and Sicily, Mar-17 Aug 1943  
Italy, 16-20 Apr 1945

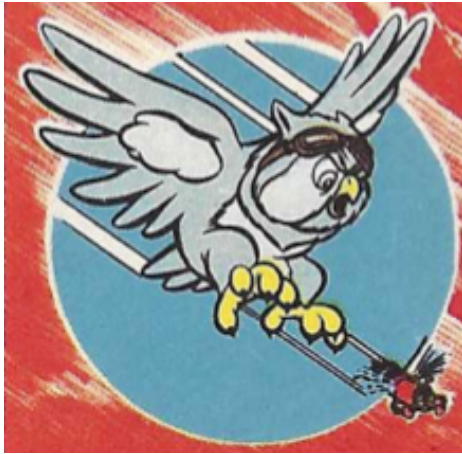
#### **Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

1 Apr 1989-31 Mar 1991  
1 Jun 1994-31 May 1996  
1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000

Air Force Organizational Excellence Award

1 Jan 1992-31 Dec 1993

**EMBLEM**



79 Pursuit Group emblem: In the history of the Army Air Corps, men lacking the required college education have not only been kept on the ground, but in the "background." Now, the 79 Pursuit Group is composed solely of enlisted personnel. It represents the first class of enlisted Pilots, otherwise known as non-commissioned officer pilots that graduated from pilot training at Ellington Field in Texas. Now the pilots of the 79th Pursuit Group at Tallahassee, Florida, boast a Disney insignia. An owl wearing the helmet and goggles of the aviator is swooping down fiercely on a cantankerous bee, symbol of that fallacious army tradition which holds an enlisted man incapable of flying intelligence. As one of its pilots has so aptly expressed it, We will make the name 'Enlisted Pilots' one that will be well remembered whenever one thinks of the present War. (Circa, 1942)



79 Fighter Group emblem: Horus, the hawk, symbolizes the determination of the 79th Fighter Group to avenge, like Horus, the death of their brilliant leader. With the speed of the hawk, they will dive out of the sun and strike with the swift deadliness of the cobra, and their deeds, like those of Horus of Egypt, will be recorded with the immortals. The blue strip at the top of the insignia is the Egyptian representation of the sky, symbolic of the medium in which our

planes operate. Below this, and in the upper left corner are the Egyptian numerals for "79", the numerical designation of our group. The inverted "U"-shaped characters each represent ten; the straight lines, one; hence 79. In the upper right hand corner is a device always seen in connection with any depiction of a sun god. First the red sun, suggesting the origin of these gods, and also symbolic of the fact that fighters frequently dive on an enemy from out of the sun. Hanging over the sun is a uraeus, or cobra, shown to represent the fact that the gods were protected, and thus symbolic of one function of fighter aircraft, namely, protection. Also symbolized are the qualities of deadliness, swiftness, and death to the enemy, which are characteristics of the cobra. Suspended from the neck of the serpent is the Egyptian Key of Life, which was always shown with a god to symbolize immortality. The Key of Life also may symbolize good fortune, a charm to bring good luck. The hawk or falcon is the chief figure in the design and is the symbolic representation of the sun-god, Horus. Its form is typically Egyptian, standing dominant, erect and fearless, the symbol of swift flight, unerring aim, strength, endurance, winged skill, and destruction of its prey. These qualities are all symbolic of the same qualities in the fighter planes of the Group, of those who fly them, and of those who keep them flying.

The historians of Ancient Egypt have recorded on their obelisks the story of Horus, the hawk. Some three thousand years ago, these scribes told of a son born to Osiris, one of the gods of the sun. This was Horus, who was orphaned in his youth when Osiris was killed by the sun-god, Set. With manhood, Horus assembled his armies, killed Set, and regained the throne that was rightfully his. The hieroglyphics on the obelisks tell how Horus, the hawk, became known to these ancients as the Avenger of His Father.

It is peculiarly significant that the 79th Fighter Group should carry on the ancient tradition of Horus. The design recalls Egypt, in whose burning skies our aircraft first met the enemy. It suggests that this land of history and sand was the beginning of the British Eighth Army's march up the Western Desert Road to Tunis, and to victory. It points to the role played by the 79th in this victory, as they fought with Montgomery and his men. Finally, it is a tribute to Colonel Peter McGoldrick, Group Commander, the first member of the Group to die in combat.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Moved with 85th, 86th, and 87th Fighter Squadrons to the Middle East, Oct-Nov 1942. Began combat operations with Ninth Air Force in Mar 1943. Escorted bombers and supported British Eighth Army ground forces in Allied operations in North Africa and Sicily.

Remained overseas as part of United States Air Forces in Europe after the war. Transferred to US without personnel and equipment in Jun 1947 and inactivated in Jul 1947.

Activated in 1955 with one operational squadron, the 86th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, and performed air defense operations until inactivation in 1960.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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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.

*War Insignia Stamp Album*, Vol 3, Hearst Publications, Inc., 1942.

Unit History. *The Falcon, Combat History of the 79<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group 1942-1945*. Cpt Ragnar Lind. F. Bruckmann Printing Co. Munich, Germany. May 1946.