

## 54<sup>th</sup> FIGHTER SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

54<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 20 Nov 1940  
Activated, 15 Jan 1941  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin-Engine), 31 Jan 1942  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron (Twin-Engine), 15 May 1942  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, Two-Engine, 20 Aug 1943  
Inactivated, 21 Mar 1946  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 10 Oct 1952  
Activated, 1 Dec 1952  
Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Dec 1960  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, 13 Jan 1987  
Activated, 8 May 1987  
Redesignated 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, 26 Sep 1991

#### STATIONS

Hamilton Field, CA, 15 Jan 1941  
Portland AB, OR, 22 May 1941  
Paine Field, WA, 22 Jan–25 May 1942  
Elmendorf Field, AK, 31 May–24 Aug 1942 (detachments at Ft Randall, AK, 6 Jun–31 Jul 1942, and at Ft Glenn, AK, 6 Jun–19 Sep 1942)  
Adak, 31 Aug 1942  
Amchitka, 12 Mar 1943

Shemya, 18 Oct 1943  
Attu, 20 Nov 1943–8 Mar 1946  
Ft Lawton, WA, 20–21 Mar 1946  
Rapid City (later, Ellsworth) AFB, SD, 1 Dec 1952–25 Dec 1960  
Elmendorf AFB, AK, 8 May 1987

#### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Kunsan AB, ROK, 15 Jun 1970–31 Oct 1970

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

55<sup>th</sup> Pursuit (later, 55th Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1941  
343<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Group, 11 Sep 1942–21 Mar 1946  
31<sup>st</sup> Air Division, 1 Dec 1952  
29<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 16 Feb 1953–25 Dec 1960  
21<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 May 1987  
21<sup>st</sup> Operations Group, 26 Sep 1991  
3<sup>rd</sup> Operations Group, 19 Dec 1991

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

XI Fighter Command, 31 May–11 Sep 1941

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-36, 1941–1942  
P-40, 1941–1942  
P-43, 1941–1942  
P-43A  
F-5, 1943  
P-38, 1942–1946  
P-38E  
P-38F  
P-38G  
P-38H  
P-38J  
P-38L  
F-51, 1952–1953  
F-84, 1953–1954  
F-84G  
F-86, 1954–1957  
F-86D  
F-89, 1957–1960  
F-89J  
F-15, 1987

#### **COMMANDERS**

## HONORS

### Service Streamers

None

### Campaign Streamers

World War II

Aleutian Islands

Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

## Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

[8 May] 1987–31 Dec 1988

## EMBLEM



54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron



54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron emblem: On a disc Sable, a leopard face canted bendwise sinister affronté Or, garnished Argent detailed of the first, eyes, nose and tongue Gules above and between its front paws bendwise Yellow, garnished Black armed Red, all within a double diminished bordure White and Azure. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "54TH FIGHTER SQ" in Blue letters. **SIGIFICANCE:** 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 leopard is from the design for the 54th Fighter Squadron (WWII origin). The leopard's intense facial expression signifies power and readiness to fight. The visible claws and fangs represent the strong capability to carry out its mission. (Approved, 4 Apr 1989, replacing emblems approved, 3 Jun 1988, 4 Jun 1987, and 2 Sep 1943)

#### **MOTTO**

ALASKA'S FIRST GUARDIANS

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Defense of Alaska during World War II.

As a direct result of the Japanese air raid on Attu on October 13, 1943, the 54th Fighter Squadron, flying P-38's arrived on Shemya from Amchitka.

The 54th Fighter Squadron was the only one equipped with the P-38. The others flew the single engine, limited range P-40. Because of its long range, the twin engine P-38 became the fighter of choice. As a result, the 54th suffered the loss of over half of its original complement of thirty pilots.

Air defense of North Central US, 1952–1960.

The 54th FIS had been activated at Rapid City AFB, (Later Ellsworth AFB), South Dakota, to replace South Dakota's 175th FIS when they returned to State Control after their Korean Conflict activation. Initially equipped with F-51Ds, and later F-84Gs and F-86Ds, the 54th FIS converted directly into F-89Js in the fall of 1957. They had seven on hand by the end of the year. By June 1958 the 54th FIS had twenty-eight and resumed combat alert.

Air defense of Alaska, 1987.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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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.