

## 58 FIGHTER SQUADRON



### MISSION

The 58 FS "Mighty Gorillas" are authorized to operate 24 assigned F-35A aircraft, planning and executing a training curriculum in support of Air Force and international partner pilot training requirements.

### LINEAGE

58 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 20 Nov 1940  
Activated, 15 Jan 1941  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Squadron, Two Engine, 8 Feb 1945  
Inactivated, 8 Dec 1945  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, 17 Jul 1946  
Activated, 20 Aug 1946  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 14 Jun 1948  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 20 Jan 1950  
Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Dec 1960  
Redesignated 58 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 16 Mar 1970  
Activated, 1 Sep 1970  
Redesignated 58 Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1991

### STATIONS

Mitchel Field, NY, 15 Jan 1941 (operated from Farmingdale, NY, 7–14 Dec 1941)  
Philadelphia, PA, 13 Dec 1941  
Norfolk, VA, 16 Jan 1942 (operated from San Francisco, CA, May–Jun 1942)  
Langley Field, VA, 22 Sep–14 Oct 1942

Port Lyautey, French Morocco, 10 Nov 1942  
Thelepte, Tunisia, 12 Dec 1943  
Telergma, Algeria, 7 Feb 1943  
Berteaux, Algeria, 2 Mar 1943  
Ebba Ksour, Tunisia, 13 Apr 1943  
Menzel Temime, Tunisia, 15 May 1943  
Pantelleria, 28 Jun 1943  
Licata, Sicily, 18 Jul 1943  
Paestum, Italy, 14 Sep 1943  
Santa Maria, Italy, 18 Nov 1943  
Cercola, Italy, 1 Jan–6 Feb 1944  
Karachi, India, 18 Feb 1944  
Pungchacheng, China, c. 30 Apr 1944  
Moran, India, 31 Aug 1944  
Sahmaw, Burma, 26 Dec 1944  
Dudhkundi, India, c. 15 May–15 Nov 1945  
Camp Shanks, NY, 7–8 Dec 1945  
Neubiberg, Germany, 20 Aug 1946  
Bad Kissingen, Germany, Jul–25 Aug 1947  
Andrews Field, MD, 25 Aug 1947  
Roswell AAFld (later, Walker AFB), NM, 16 Sep 1947  
Otis AFB, MA, 16 Nov 1948  
Walker AFB, NM, 2 Aug 1959–25 Dec 1960  
Eglin AFB, FL, 1 Sep 1970

#### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, 29 Apr–18 Oct 1972 and 1 Jun–14 Sep 1973  
Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, 28 Aug 1990–12 Apr 1991

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

33 Pursuit (later, 33 Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1941–8 Dec 1945  
33 Fighter (later 33 Fighter Interceptor) Group, 20 Aug 1946  
4707 Defense Wing, 6 Feb 1952  
564 Air Defense Group, 16 Feb 1953  
33 Fighter Group, 18 Aug 1955  
4735<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Group, 18 Aug 1957  
34 Air Division, 1 Aug 1959  
Albuquerque Air Defense Sector, 1 Jan 1960  
Oklahoma City Air Defense Sector, 15 Sep –25 Dec 1960  
33 Tactical Fighter (later, 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter) Wing, 1 Sep 1970  
33 Operations Group, 1 Dec 1991  
Air Education and Training Command 1 Oct 2009

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

432 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 29 Apr–14 Oct 1972  
8 Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Jun–14 Sep 1973  
33 Tactical Fighter Wing Provisional, 28 Aug 1990–12 Apr 1991

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P-39, 1941  
P-40, 1941–1944  
P-47, 1944–1945  
P-38, 1944–1945  
P(later F)-51, 1946–1949  
F-84, 1948–1950  
F-86, 1950–1952  
F-94, 1952–1955  
F-89, 1955–1960  
F-4, 1970–1979  
F-15, 1979

### **COMMANDERS**

Lt Col John R. Delapp, #1956  
Lt Col Mark L. O’laughlin, 2 Oct 2009  
Lt Col John B. Wilbourne  
Lt Col Lee E. Kloos, 15 Jul 2011

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Algeria-French Morocco with Arrowhead  
Tunisia  
Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Air Combat, EAME Theater  
India-Burma  
China Defensive  
Central Burma  
  
Vietnam  
Vietnam Ceasefire  
Southwest Asia  
  
Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Panama, 1989–1990

**Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

Central Tunisia, 15 Jan 1943

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

25 Apr–16 Oct 1972

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Oct 1978–30 Apr 1980

1 May 1984–30 Apr 1986

1 Apr 1990–31 Mar 1992

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

29 Apr–18 Oct 1972

**EMBLEM**



58 Fighter Squadron emblem



58 Fighter Squadron, Jet emblem



58 Fighter Interceptor Squadron emblem: On a light azure disc, piped dark azure, a demi sphere issuing from base of the last, surmounted by a conventionalized jet speeding through space proper, bendwise, on its nose an eagle's head erased, flames issuing from its tail, all between a circle of stars, five and eight, all gules. (Approved, 30 Mar 1951)



58 Tactical Fighter Squadron emblem: On a disc composed of a Light Blue sky and White cloud formations, within a band divided into four segments, top and bottom segments Blue, dexter and sinister segments checky, alternating Blue and White, a Brown gorilla (eyes and tongue Red, pupils Dark Brown, teeth White) rising above a White cloud formation issuing from base on which are two Red flight symbols each trailing an arced Light Blue vapor trail. (Approved, 14 Jul 1971)



58 Fighter Squadron emblem

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 58 Fighter Squadron has a long and distinguished history that dates back to the aerial battles of World War II. Activated as the 58 Pursuit Squadron (part of the 33rd Pursuit Group) stationed at Mitchel Field, New York, the squadron was charged with the ongoing mission of aerial defense of the United States. When the United States entered World War II, the 58 took an active role in the war effort by participating in several operations during a three year

overseas tour. These operations include the invasion of Morocco in November 1942, combat operations in the Mediterranean Theater from November 1942 to February 1944, and operations in the China-Burma, India campaign, April 1944 to August 1945. During the operations in the Mediterranean Theater, the 58 earned the nickname "Gorillas" for the guerrilla warfare-like techniques it utilized. While operating in the various theaters, the 58 flew the P-40 Warhawk, P-47 Thunderbolt and P-38 Lightning. As a result of its superior performance, the 58 received the Distinguished Unit Citation for combat operations conducted in central Tunisia.

Part of US occupation forces in Germany 1946–1947.

Air defense of US, 1947–1960.

The 58 FIS had been stationed at Otis AFB, Massachusetts, and assigned to the 4707th ADW while flying F-94Cs.

The 58 FIS, which had switched from F-86As to F-94Bs in the spring of 1952, transitioned to F-94Cs commencing in March 1953, receiving the first batch directly from Lockheed, and then the remainder in August from other units as the older aircraft were transferred.

In February 1953 they were further assigned to the 564th ADG. Conversion from Starfires to F-89Ds began in early 1955, and by the end of June they had sixteen on hand. On August 18, 1955, Project Arrow took effect, and the 58 FIS rejoined their reactivated and original 33rd Fighter Group. The initial Group Commander was Colonel Fred Hook, who was replaced by Colonel David Tudor in 1956. The 58 FIS was commanded by Lt. Colonel John Delapp. By the end of the year, the number of F-89Ds had increased to twenty-six.

The 33rd FIG, with the 58 FIS flying F-89s and the 60th FIS flying F-94s, was responsible for the air defense of the US's eastern seaboard from the south of Maine to New York. In addition, the 58 FIS was tasked with working with the Lincoln Laboratory, the USAF's contractor through MIT, for the early development of the Data-Link program. An additional program was the exploration of the ACA, Aircraft Controlled Approach. This program utilized radar reflectors that were strategically placed next to Runway 24 at Otis and were tuned to the F-89s radar frequency. This permitted them to be picked up on the Scorpions radar and be differentiated from the ground clutter, "grass," on the Radar Intercept Operator's (RIO) scope. With the outline of Cape Cod being very apparent to the RIO, all that had to be done was further align the F-89 with the radar reflectors and at a predetermined point start the penetration, with additional fine tuning corrections being made as the F-89 approached Otis. The crews got to the point where they were as accurate as a GCA or ILS approach, but the system was never approved for operational use.

In the fall of 1956 the F-89DS were replaced by F-89Hs, with twenty-six being assigned by the end of the year. In the spring of 1957 the F-89Hs were transferred to the 75th FIS at Presque Isle AFB, and replaced by F-89Js, with twenty-eight on board by the end of June. As with other

ADC squadrons, the 58 FIS flew to Vincent AFB for rocket training with the Genie missiles. They flew against targets towed by B-57s on the end of a mile-long reel, and were scored by cameras on the Canberra. And, as with the other F-89 squadrons scheduled into Vincent, these training missions had to be flown only during the early morning hours or late at night, as the weight of the F-89s was heavy enough to break through the asphalt taxiways at Vincent during the daytime heat. (Not to mention that the runways were considered to be a couple miles of too short to get the F-89s airborne when it was hot). On August 2, 1959, the 58 FIS was relocated from Otis to Walker AFB, Roswell, New Mexico, with twenty-four Scorpions. They were inactivated at Walker on December 25, 1959, being the second from the last ADC squadron to fly the F-89.

After its service in World War II, the 58 saw a period of activation and inactivation at various Air Force installations flying both the F-84 Thunderstreak and F-94 Starfire. This fluctuation of activity leveled out when the 58, part of the redesignated 33d Tactical Fighter Wing was assigned to Eglin Air Force Base, Florida and began flying the F-4E Phantom.

In 1972, the 58 was deployed to Udorn, Thailand under what was known as the "Summer Help Program." During this period, the 58 was credited as the first temporary duty unit to down an enemy aircraft. On June 2, 1972, Major Philip W. Handley and Lieutenant John J. Smallwood shot down a MiG-19 with a 300 round burst from their M-61A Vulcan Cannon, disproving the perception that American aircrews had lost their dogfighting skills. Just over two months later on August 12, 1972, another 58 fighter was credited with a kill after shooting down a MiG-21 with an AIM-7 Sparrow, a radar guided missile. This second kill was the last credited to the 58 during its six-month rotation in Southeast Asia.

Under Constant Guard I, F-4Es from the 4th TFW's 334th and 335th TFSs, Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, arrived during April, 1972, and were assigned to the 8th TFW at Ubon RTAB. During late April, F-4Es from the 308th TFS at Homestead AFB and the 58 TFS at Eglin AFB were deployed to Udorn RTAB under Constant Guard II and there, assigned to the 432nd TRW. Seventy-two F-4Es were now available in Southeast Asia assigned to the 4th TFS, 421st TFS, 69th TFS and 34th TFS, and additional aircraft under Constant Guard continued to arrive at regular intervals.

Another F-4E kill followed on May 31, when Capt. Jeffery S. Feinstein claimed his second air-to-air combat victory. Later, Feinstein would become an ace while flying the F-4E as a pilot of the 13th TFS, 432nd TFW. On July 8, two more future aces, Capt. Steve Ritchie and Capt. Charles DeBellevue downed two MIG-21S while flying an F-4E from the 58 TFS, 432nd TRW.

58 TFS aircraft, crewed by pilot Maj. Phillip W. Handley and WSO 1Lt. John J. Smallwood, destroyed a MiG using the 20mm rotary cannon (the second kill using this weapon).

In 1979, the 58 Fighter Squadron became the first squadron in the 33d Tactical Fighter Wing to receive the F-15 Eagle. The 58 proved the war fighting capability of the F-15 during its deployment to Germany for exercise Coronet Eagle. During the exercise, the 58 utilized 18 F-



15s to fly 1001 sorties in less than three weeks. The unit repeated this deployment in 1982 utilizing 24 F-15s making it the first full F-15 deployment in history. Ten years later, the 58 participated in Operation Just Cause where forces successfully removed Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega from power in Panama.

The 58 was once again called upon to prove its mettle in August of 1990 when Saddam Hussein invaded the tiny country of Kuwait. Twenty-four F-15s under the command of Colonel Rick Parsons departed Eglin Air Force Base for King Faisal Air Base, Saudi Arabia as part of the build-up of coalition forces in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. In the early morning hours of January 17, 1991, Operation Desert Storm commenced. Captain John J.B. Kelk claimed the first aerial victory by downing the first MiG-29. As the war progressed, the 58 flew 1,689 combat sorties and destroyed 15 other enemy aircraft. During the course of the war, the 58 accomplished feats that no other coalition member matched including; the most air-to-air kills, the most double kills, and the most sorties and hours flown by any F-15 unit in theater. The 58 also destroyed the most MiG-29s (a total of five).

Some recent accomplishments of the 58 include; the first fighter squadron to bring the AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile (AMRAAM) into full operation, numerous rotations to the Saudi Arabian theater supporting Operation Southern Watch by patrolling the no-fly zone, and participation in Operation Uphold Democracy where the United States helped bring control back to Haiti.

10 January 1997 F-15C. 85-0099, of the 58 TFS catches fire on take-off from Eglin. Pilot returns for an immediate landing and egresses safely on the ground. Aircraft completely destroyed by fire. This aircraft credited with MiG-25 kill by AIM-7M on 19 January 1991 during Operation Desert Storm while flown by Capt. Lawrence E. Pitta.

On 3 September 2002, at 9:15 p.m. local time, an F-15C, Serial Number (S/N) 80-0015, was damaged during a night landing and departed the runway at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Florida. The mishap pilot (MP) egressed the aircraft without injury. The mishap aircraft (MA) sustained damage with the loss valued at \$1,555,786.91. The runway surface, as well as lighting fixtures and equipment being installed in an open trench in the underrun to the runway, sustained minor damage. No personal injuries or damage to private property resulted from the accident. The MA, call sign Nomad 22, assigned to the 58 Fighter Squadron, 33d Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, was part of a four-ship, two-versus-two night intercept training mission. Following completion of work area events, the flight recovered to Eglin AFB as two, 2-ship elements, with the mishap flight the first to recover for an Instrument Landing System (ILS) approach and landing. The MP maintained a 2 nautical mile trail behind the flight leader and thus was second in the landing sequence. At the time of the accident, construction was ongoing at Eglin AFB for upgrade of taxiway and threshold lights for the runway upon which the MP attempted to land. Additionally, the clear zone immediately prior to the threshold of the runway, also called the underrun, was closed due to an open trench cut for new threshold lighting. The MP landed short of the runway, in the underrun, and almost immediately struck the open trench and a surrounding dirt berm, damaging the left main landing gear. The right main landing gear

sustained a blown tire. The MA continued down the runway before departing the left side of the runway surface. There were two causes of the accident, both supported by clear and convincing evidence. First, the mishap pilot incorrectly executed his landing sequence and landed 60 feet short of the runway, in the underrun, which was closed due to construction. Second, the mishap aircraft struck a 3-feet wide by 3-feet deep by 75-feet long trench 6 feet prior to the runway threshold. Both causes equally contributed to producing the damage to the MA. But for the combination of these two causes this accident would not have occurred. In addition, three additional factors substantially contributed to the accident, each supported by substantial evidence. First, a breakdown of information flow from airfield management, civil engineering inspectors, and safety organizations to flight operations supervisors detailing dimensions of the open trench and close proximity to the runway threshold, precluded further supervisor risk assessments. Second, contract requirements specifically designed to minimize risks to flying operations resulting from open trenches, ditches, and dirt berms were not fully recognized and therefore were neither complied with nor enforced, resulting in an open, unmarked hazard. Third, failure by the MP to adequately assess the risks of the closed underrun precluded him from planning a longer landing to avoid the open trench hazard.

On 20 February 2008, at 1332 local/1932 Zulu (or Greenwich Mean Time), two F-15C aircraft (tail numbers 79-0075 and 81-0043) collided and were completely destroyed 44 nautical miles south of Tyndall Air Force Base (AFB), Florida, during a scheduled day high aspect basic fighter maneuver training mission engagement killing 1st Lt. Ali Jivanjee. Capt. Tucker Hamilton ejected from the other fighter and survived. Both pilots ejected and one was rescued from the Gulf by the fishing boat *Niña*, owned by Bart Niquet of Lynn Haven, Florida, which was guided to the pilot by an HC-144A Ocean Sentry aircraft. A 1st SOW AC-130H and an MV-22 Osprey were also diverted to the scene to help search as were five Coast Guard aircraft and two vessels. An HH-60 Jayhawk from Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile lifted the pilot from the fishing boat and evacuated him to the Eglin Hospital. The second pilot was rescued from the Gulf by an HH-60 Jayhawk from CGAS Clearwater and also taken to the Eglin Hospital. The mishap occurred within Warning Area 151B, an authorized restricted airspace for military training, and caused no damage to private property. Both mishap aircraft and pilots were assigned to the 58 Fighter Squadron, 33d Fighter Wing, Eglin AFB, Florida. The 33d Fighter Wing's mission is air superiority in support of national security objectives. Mishap pilot 1 has served on active duty since 2002 and has been qualified in the F-15C since 2005. He is a current and qualified four ship flight leader. Mishap pilot 2 graduated from formal training at Kingsley Field, Oregon, in August 2007, and was a mission qualified F-15C pilot for approximately four months. The mishap flight was a two ship of F-15Cs flying in surge operations. The mission was planned as a high aspect basic fighter maneuvers training sortie. The mission proceeded as briefed and scheduled until the third high aspect pass of the first engagement. The Accident Investigation Board President determined that the mishap was unrelated to the airworthiness and maintenance of the aircraft. The Accident Investigation Board President determined, by clear and convincing evidence, the primary cause of this mishap was pilot error, in that both mishap pilots failed to clear their flight paths and failed to anticipate their impending high aspect mid-air collision. The Accident Investigation Board President investigated the following factors which could have contributed to the mishap, however there was insufficient evidence to

determine that any one particular factor or combination directly contributed to this mishap. 1. Loss of Mishap Pilots flight proficiency during the F-15C fleet stand down. 2. Lack of a pilot and integrated mission Operational Risk Management program. 3. Lack of integrated Training Rule program that identifies and informs squadron leadership and flight members of training rule violations.

10-13 Apr 2008 The 58 FS deployed to Robert Gray Army Airfield, Fort Hood Texas in support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Their primary mission was to enforce Temporary Flight Restrictions around Crawford Ranch. The deployment consisted of 6 F-15s and 88 personnel.

26 Oct – 30 Nov 2008 58 FS deployed 10 F-15s and 170 personnel to Al Dhafra, United Arab Emirates to support AFCENT exercise IRON FALCON 09-01. The aim of the exercise was to improve tactical capabilities among coalition air forces, develop and standardize tactics, techniques, and procedures in a coalition environment, and improve air combat doctrine through training and practice.

7/15/2011 The Department of Defense's first F-35 Lightning II joint strike fighter touched down at its new home here July 14, marking a major milestone in the nation's military history. Upon arrival, the jet officially became part of the Air Force inventory. It now belongs to the JSF training unit, the 33rd Fighter Wing. Flying it in was Lt. Col. Eric Smith of the 58 Fighter Squadron, the first Air Force qualified F-35 pilot. "It was a smooth ride in," said the colonel of the hour and 40 minute flight. "The jet behaved awesomely. I'm just so proud to bring it home to Eglin (Air Force Base)." A crowd of 33rd FW people braved the 90 degree heat to watch the fifth-generation fighter touchdown and taxi in. Col. Andrew Toth, the 33rd FW commander, was the first to greet his pilot upon arrival. "It's an exciting day here at the wing where our joint and integrated team has been preparing for this day since October 2009," Toth said. "I have no doubt the caliber of the Airmen, Sailors, Marines and contractors will provide safe and effective training operations at Eglin (AFB). Now, we look forward to the start of classes later this year." Now that the aircraft is on station, F-35 maintainers will train and be certified here at home. "It's pretty exciting," said Tech. Sgt. Brian West, the crew chief for the new aircraft. "We're thrilled to be able to train with one of our own."

As the world's first multi-role stealth fighter, the F-35 is known for its superior range, cutting-edge avionics and next-generation sensor fusion. Each model shares breakthroughs in combat performance, survivability and support, while each is specifically tailored for unique service needs. Lt. Col. J.D. Wilbourne, the 58 FS commander, said he was thrilled to see his first aircraft arrive, one day before his change of command. "This is the best week ever," said the commander, who flew chase in an F-16 Fighting Falcon. "This aircraft ensures air dominance for the next 30 years, and today marks the first step toward that goal." 2011

Members of the Virginia Air National Guard's 149th Fighter Squadron, flying four F-22s from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, conducted their first operational integration-training mission with F-35 strike fighters at Eglin AFB, Fla. "The F-22 and F-35 squadrons integrated very well," said Maj. Steven Frodsham, pilot with the 149th FS. "The lessons learned and tactics developed from this training opportunity will help to form the foundation for future growth in our combined

fifth generation fighter tactics," he said. The F-22 and F-35 pilots flew offensive counterair, defensive counterair, and interdiction missions during the Nov. 5 drills. "When the F-22 and F-35 come together, it brings out the strength of both airplanes," said Lt. Col. Matt Renbarger, commander of Eglin's 58 Fighter Squadron, an F-35A training unit. "The F-22 was built to be an air-to-air superiority fighter and the F-35 was built to be a strike fighter. These airplanes complement each other and we're trying to learn how to take that from a design perspective into a tactical arena and be the most effective combat team we can be," he said. 2014

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

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