

66th WEAPONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

66th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 66th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin-Engine), 31 Jan 1942
Redesignated 66th Fighter Squadron (Twin-Engine), 15 May 1942
Redesignated 66th Fighter Squadron, 1 Jun 1942
Redesignated 66th Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, 21 Aug 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Activated, 15 Aug 1946
Redesignated 66th Fighter Squadron, Jet, 20 Jul 1948
Redesignated 66th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Inactivated, 8 Jan 1958
Redesignated 66th Fighter Weapons Squadron, 22 Aug 1969
Activated, 15 Oct 1969
Inactivated, 30 Dec 1981
Redesignated 66th Weapons Squadron, 24 Jan 2003
Activated, 3 Feb 2003

STATIONS

Mitchell Field, NY, 15 Jan 1941
Hartford, CT, 18 Aug 1941
Farmingdale, NY, 14 Dec 1941
Quonset Point, RI, 27 Feb 1942

Hillsgrove, RI, 8 Jun-5 Jul 1942
Beit Daras, Palestine, 19 Aug 1942
Egypt, 16 Sep 1942
Gambut, Libya, 13 Nov 1942
El Gazala, Libya, 15 Nov 1942
Belandah, Libya, 11 Dec 1942
Hamariet, Libya, 12 Jan 1943
Darragh, Libya, 18 Jan 1943
Zuara, Libya, 24 Feb 1943
Nefatia, Tunisia, 5 Mar 1943
Ben Gardane, Tunisia, 7 Mar 1943
Soltane, Tunisia, 20 Mar 1943
Medenine, Tunisia, 4 Apr 1943
Cekira, Tunisia, 11 Apr 1943
El Djem, Tunisia, 14 Apr 1943
El Hani, Tunisia, 21 Apr 1943
Bow Grara, Tunisia, 20 May 1943
Malta, 27 Jun 1943
Pachino, Sicily, 19 Jul 1943
Scordia, Sicily 30 Jul 1943
Gioia del Colles, Italy, 25 Sep 1943
Foggia, Italy, c. 1 Oct 1943
Amendola, Italy, 27 Oct 1943
Cercola, Italy, 1 Mar 1944
Alto, Corsica, 28 Mar 1944
Ombrone, Italy, 11 Sep 1944
Grosseto, Italy, 25 Sep 1944
Villafranca di Verona, Italy, 29 Apr 1945
Grosseto, Italy, 8 May 1945
Bagnoli, Italy, 15 Jul-5 Aug 1945
Drew Field, FL, 23 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Shemya, AK, 15 Aug 1946
Elmendorf Field (later, AFB), AK, c. 30 May 1947-1 Dec 1957
Oxnard AFB, CA, 1 Dec 1957-8 Jan 1958
Nellis AFB, NV, 15 Oct 1969-30 Dec 1981
Nellis AFB, NV, 3 Feb 2003

ASSIGNMENTS

57th Pursuit (later, 57th Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1951-7 Nov 1945
57th Fighter (later, 57th Fighter-Interceptor) Group, 15 Aug 1946
10th Air Division, 13 Apr 1953
414th Fighter Group, 1 Dec 1957-8 Jan 1958
57th Fighter Weapons (later, 57th Tactical Training; 57th Fighter Weapons) Wing, 15 Oct 1969-30 Dec 1981

USAF Weapons School, 3 Feb 2003

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-40, 1941-1944
P-40C
P-40E
P-40F
P-40L
P-47, 1944-1945
P-47D
P-38, 1946
P-51, 1946-1948
P-51H
F-80, 1948-1951
F-80C
F-94, 1951-1953
F-94B
F-89, 1953-1957
F-89D
F-105, 1969-1975
T-39, 1969-1972
F-4, 1971-1975
A-10, 1977-1981

COMMANDERS

Lt G. C. Russell, 15 Jan 1941
Cpt Peter McGoldrick, 19 Aug 1941
LTC Lydon King, 20 Nov 1941
Cpt Richard E. Fairlamb, 28 Jun 1942
Maj James G. Curl, 1 Aug 1943
Maj Glenn A. Reich, 18 Aug 1943
Maj William P. Benedict, 12 Dec 1943
Cpt Cortland McCoy Jr., 5 Jun 1944
LTC Charles C. Leaf, 19 Jul 1944-7 Nov 1945
Cpt William L. Jacobsen, 15 Aug 1946
Maj Albert S. Kelly, 28 Aug 1946
Maj Julius D. Shivers, 17 Jan 1947
Cpt Jack A. Blacker, 7 May 1947
Maj James A. Wilson, 3 Jun 1947
Maj Albert S. Kelly, 14 May 1948
Maj Taras T. Popovich, 1 Jul 1948-unkn
Maj Richard C. Catledge, unkn-21 Dec 1951
Maj Lester F. Kress, 21 Dec 1951
LTC J. D. Collinsworth, 1953

Col John C. Haygood, Oct 1953
LTC Robert M. Fry, Jun 1954
LTC Richard L. Midkiff, Dec 1955
Unkn, Dec 1956-8 Jan 1958
LTC Ronald E. Johnson, 15 Oct 1969
LTC William Robert Looney, 28 Oct 1969
LTC Richard D. Westcott, Apr 1971
LTC D. G. Nelson, by 1 Jul 1972
LTC Raymond C. Ramsey, 15 Oct 1973
LTC Kenneth W. Lyon, Jul 1974
LTC Rodney D. Gunn, 1 Jul 1977
LTC Donnie M. Tribble, 1977
LTC Joel T. Hall, Jan 1978
LTC Michael L. Ferguson, 10 Apr 1980
None (not manned), 12 May-30 Dec 1981

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Egypt-Libya

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines

Po Valley

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

North Africa and Sicily, 24 Oct 1942-17 Aug 1943

Tunis and Cape Bon Area, 18 Apr 1943

Italy, 19 Apr 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

25 Oct 1969-25 Sep 1971

French Croix de Guerre, with Palm
Oct 1942-May 1945

EMBLEM



66th Fighter Squadron emblem: a brown bird having the body and head of a penguin, the yellow claws and beak of a falcon; holding a lighted cigar, wearing the clothes of a pug. The garb is listed as a red cap with visor pulled down and worn backwards, a yellow turtle-necked jersey with sleeves rolled up; and boxing gloves. (Approved, 2 Jan 1942)



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

When the Fighter Weapons School reorganized in 1981, the 66th FWS was redesignated as the A-10 Division. It has transitioned back to its heritage as the 66th Weapons Squadron.

The 66th Weapons Squadron traces its lineage back to the 66th Fighter Squadron, which was

activated on 14 November 1940. During World War II, the 66th flew missions in North Africa and Italy flying P-40 and P-47 aircraft. After the war, the unit transferred to Alaska under the Alaskan Air Command, flying P-51, F-80, F-84 and F-89 aircraft until the unit was inactivated in 1957.

During the Vietnam War, the 66th was reactivated under the 57th Fighter Weapons Wing at Nellis AFB, and trained F-105 and F-4C WILD WEASEL Weapons Officers until it was inactivated in 1975.

The 66th Weapons Squadron has graduated 308 A-10 Weapons Officers since 1977.

Air defense in Alaska, Aug 1946-Dec 1957 and US west coast area, Dec 1957-Jan 1958.

Unit inactivated at Oxnard before receiving aircraft.

66th Fighter Weapons Squadron was reconstituted at Nellis AFB. The 66th's mission was to develop the A-10 Fighter Weapons Instructor Course, train A-10 pilots in advanced fighter tactics and weapons delivery, and develop and validate new tactics for the A-10. The 66th had formerly flown the F-105G Wild Weasel.

As in the case of the 65th FIS, the 66th FIS's designation was transferred to the Air Defense Command on December 1, 1957, "Without Personnel and Equipment." The 66th FIS was inactivated at Oxnard AFB, California, on January 8, 1958.

Arriving in October, 1977, the first 57th A-10s were assigned to the 66th Fighter Weapons Squadron. The 66th FWS trained the initial cadre of weapons instructors from all A-10 units. The 66th FWS inactivated at the end of 1981, and the mission moved to the A-10 Division of the USAF Fighter Weapons School. As a result of the addition of B-52 and B-1B bombers to ACC, and the setup of a bomber weapons program, the "Fighter" was deleted from FWS becoming the USAF Weapons School in June, 1993.

Immediately after an Air Force unit redesignation program saw the 343rd Fighter Group on Shemya designated as the 57th Fighter Group, on 15 August 1946. The new 57th FG began receiving P-51Hs from the Air Material Command depot at Spokane Field, Washington, where they had been winterized. The first two examples went to the 57th FG's 64th Fighter Squadron, and the second pair to the 65th FS. It was an inauspicious beginning, for 44-64511 was written off during an emergency landing on August 23rd because of a rough running engine and its pilot collapsing its landing gear. It was not until October before eight more P-51 Hs arrived and the last of the Group's old P-38s were disposed of.

Due to Air Force reductions of personnel, the Group's three squadrons were combined with the 64th FS, absorbing what remained of the 66th FS and the 65th FS, becoming tasked as the Group's-Reserve Training Unit. Their official role was that of "fighter defense of the Aleutian Chain, fighter support, assisting the Army in ground defense". One Mustang was lost in

December, at Adak, which was the nearest suitable alternate to Shemy three hundred-fifty miles away!

It was determined that Shemya was operationally unfeasible for Mustang operations, particularly in respect to constant adverse weather conditions and logistical difficulties. In April 1947, the 57th FG withdrew to Fort Richardson, Anchorage, Alaska. The 66th FS completed a move on May 17th. The 65th moved up to 26 Mile Field, a satellite of Ladd Field, Fairbanks (later Eielson AFB), for practice bombing of ice dams brought on by the spring breakups. In August the 64th FS was reactivated and moved to Marks Field, Nome, with eighteen P-51Hs that had been in storage at Fort Richardson. They were just 150 miles from mainland Russia.

On August 8th the 57th FG flew its first large-scale exercise with eight P-51Hs of the 65th FS and sixteen from the 66th FS to intercept B-29s of the 7th Bombardment Group, TOY from Fort Worth, Texas, to Fairbanks, Alaska. Then, on August 15th, they worked with the Navy's Task Force 17, a submarine fleet operating off the Semide Islands.

On 14 March 1948, the 57th FG was ordered to become 100% combat ready as a result of Stalin's Berlin Blockade. As the 64th FS's location at Marks Field was considered to be untenable, they were withdrawn to Ladd Field. The winter paint schemes on the Mustangs were removed, and the aircraft's tail wheels, which had been locked down for over a year, were again made retractable and all aircraft were armed.

In April, the 57th FG obtained a squadron's worth of P-80As from the 94th FS and jet training commenced while the Group maintained a "business as usual" facade for the civilian populace. They remained on full alert, through June 10 when the 64th and 66th FSs partially stood down for P-80 training. On September 6th, the Berlin Blockade situation was determined to be calm enough to have the Group come off alert status. The 64th and 66th FSs began receiving P-80Cs and the Mustangs were prepared for transfer to the Air National Guard. The Mustangs went to the 113th FS at Stout Field, Indiana, the 181st FS at Dallas, Texas, and the 162nd FS at Dayton, Ohio. Three were lost en route to the ANG, with one fatality. The 57th FG had lost twenty-eight P-51Hs (five in midair collisions) in the two years they flew the aircraft in near combat conditions in a hostile weather environment.

On 18 November 2003, at 15:33 local time (PST), an A-10 assigned to the 66th Weapons Squadron, 57th Wing, S/N 79-0143, impacted the ground in a military training range approximately 45 miles northwest of Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. The mishap aircraft (MA), flying out of Nellis Air Force Base, was part of a scheduled A-10 Weapons Instructor Course training mission. While performing the tactical portion of the mission, the MA experienced an engine compressor stall resulting in loss of thrust from the right engine. At the time of the engine stall, the speed brakes on the aircraft were extended. The combination of the speed brakes being extended and the right engine being inoperative created a situation in which the mishap pilot (MP) was unable to maintain a safe airspeed without descending. Upon reaching the prescribed minimum safe ejection altitude, the MP ejected while the MA continued descending until impacting the terrain. The MP survived the incident without injury. The mishap

aircraft was totally destroyed upon impact, resulting in a loss of \$10,326,842.20. The MA impacted on undeveloped property owned by the federal government. There were no injuries and, other than the total loss of the aircraft, there was no damage to military or civilian property. There was clear and convincing evidence that the mishap was caused by a combination of the failure of the right engine and the inability to retract the speed brakes. There was clear and convincing evidence that during high angle of attack maneuvering, the right engine experienced a compressor stall resulting in a loss of thrust. There was clear and convincing evidence that the normal and emergency speed brake retract systems failed to close the extended speed brakes, generating an excess drag condition which, combined with the engine failure, placed the aircraft in a significant thrust-deficient condition. The pilot had no other means of retracting the speed brakes. Because of the intermittent nature of the problem and the extensive damage to the wreckage, the Accident Investigation Board was unable to establish the cause of the emergency speed brake retract system failure. The failure of the engine combined with the increased drag from the extended speed brakes prevented the safe recovery of the aircraft. If either condition had been corrected (right engine restarted or speed brakes retracted), the MA would have been recoverable. The MP correctly analyzed the situation and applied the appropriate procedures to correct these failures. The MP's decision to eject once the MA had descended below 2,000 AGL was correct and consistent with guidance and directives.

Though the A-10's future is still in limbo, pilots at the Air Force Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nev., are pushing the envelope on ways to perform close air support in challenged and unchallenged environments, Lt. Col. Scott Mills, commander of the 66th Weapons Squadron, told Air Force Magazine. Mills, a veteran A-10 pilot, said regardless of the platform, it is vital for pilots to get in the mindset of the ground commander and understand how critical time is from the moment a pilot learns troops are in contact to when the pilot can act on threats. Integration, connectivity, and better situational awareness also is critical to better CAS, he noted. As they work to improve CAS, fliers in the 66th WPS will take every chance they get to collaborate with MQ-9 Reapers flying with the 26th WPS, which runs remotely piloted aircraft tactics, said Mills. Even though Reapers don't get to fly as much CAS training as other mission areas, due to the demands of course priorities, they are "incredibly capable" when working with other assets, he said. 2014

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 19 Nov 2010

Updated: 24 Dec 2016

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.