

## 78 ATTACK SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

78 Aero Squadron organized, 28 Feb 1918  
Redesignated, Squadron A, Taliaferro Field, TX, 23 Jul 1918  
Demobilized, 15 Nov 1918

78 Observation Squadron constituted, 18 Oct 1927  
Redesignated 78 Pursuit Squadron, 8 May 1929  
Activated, 1 Apr 1931

Squadron A, Taliaferro Field, TX reconstituted, and consolidated with 78 Observation Squadron,  
25 Apr 1933. Consolidated organization designated 78 Observation Squadron.

Inactivated, 1 Sep 1937  
Redesignated 78 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor), 22 Dec 1939  
Activated, 1 Feb 1940  
Redesignated 78 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942  
Redesignated 78 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, 20 Aug 1943  
Inactivated, 15 Oct 1946  
Redesignated 78 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 11 Sep 1952  
Activated, 1 Nov 1952  
Redesignated 78 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 1 Apr 1954  
Redesignated 78 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958  
Inactivated, 1 May 1992  
Redesignated 78 Fighter Squadron, 22 Dec 1993  
Activated, 1 Jan 1994  
Inactivated, 30 Jun 2003  
Redesignated 78 Reconnaissance Squadron, 19 Apr 2006  
Activated, 19 May 2006

Redesignated 78 Attack Squadron 1 Jul 2010

### **STATIONS**

Waco, TX, 28 Feb 1918  
Taliaferro Field, TX, 28 Feb-15 Nov 1918  
France Field, Canal Zone, 1 Apr 1931  
Albrook Field, Canal Zone, 15 Oct 1932-1 Sep 1937  
Wheeler Field, TH, 1 Feb 1940  
Kaneohe, TH, 9 Dec 1941  
Midway, 23 Jan 1943  
Barking Sands, TH, 23 Apr 1943  
Haliewa Field, TH, 31 Jul 1943  
Stanley Field, TH, 6 Jan 1944  
Mokuleia Field, TH, 1 Apr 1944  
Bellows Field, TH, 8 Jun 1944-24 Jan 1945  
South Field, Iwo Jima, 2 Mar 1945  
Bellows Field, TH, 25 Nov 1945  
Wheeler Field, TH, 9 Feb-15 Oct 1946  
RAF Shepherds Grove, England, 1 Nov 1952  
RAF Sculthorpe, England, 31 May 1956  
RAF Shepherds Grove, England, 3 May 1957  
RAF Woodbridge, England, 22 Dec 1958-1 May 1992  
Shaw AFB, SC, 1 Jan 1994-30 Jun 2003  
Nellis AFB, NV, 19 May 2006-1 Jul 2008  
Creech AFB, NV 1 Jul 2008

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Unkn, 28 Feb-15 Nov 1918  
20 Pursuit Group (attached to 6 Composite Group), 1 Apr 1931  
3 Attack Wing (attached to 6 Composite Group), 15 Jun 1932  
16 Pursuit Group, 1 Dec 1932-1 Sep 1937  
18 Pursuit (later, 18 Fighter) Group, 1 Feb 1940  
15 Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1943-15 Oct 1946  
81 Fighter-Interceptor (later, 81 Fighter-Bomber) Group, 1 Nov 1952  
81 Fighter-Bomber (later, 81 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Feb 1955-1 May 1992  
20 Operations Group, 1 Jan 1994-30 Jun 2003  
Tenth Air Force, 19 May 2006-16 Aug 2007  
926 Group, 17 Aug 2007

### **ATTACHMENTS**

81 Fighter-Interceptor Wing, 22 Apr 1954-7 Feb 1955

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

JN-4

JN-6  
S-4  
P-12, 1932-1936  
P-26, 1940  
P-36, 1940-1941  
P-40, 1941-1944  
P-39, 1942  
P-47, 1944-1945  
P-51, 1944-1946  
F-86, 1952-1955  
F-84, 1954-1958  
F-101, 1958-1966  
F-4, 1965-1979  
A-10, 1979-1992  
F-16, 1994-2003  
MQ-1, 2006  
MQ-9, 2007

#### **COMMANDERS**

Unkn, 28 Feb-15 Nov 1918  
Unknown, Jun 29-1 Apr 1931  
Capt Louis N. Eller, 1 Apr 1931  
1Lt Patrick N. Timberlake, 6 Jun 1931  
1Lt Earle E. Partridge, 4 Nov 1931  
2Lt Nathan B. Forrest 16 Dec 1931  
1Lt Cecil E. Henry, 16 Jan 1932  
1Lt James G. Pratt, 15 Jan 1934  
Maj Burton M. Hovey, Jr., 12 Sep 1934  
1Lt Frank A. Armstrong, Jr., 31 Oct 1936  
Maj Gilbert T. Collar, 1 Nov 1936  
1Lt Trenholm J. Meyer, 1 May 1937  
Capt Manning E. Tillery, 12 May 1937  
1Lt Millard A. Lewis, 4 Aug 1937  
Inactive, 1 Sep 37-1 Feb 1940  
Capt Daniel W. Jenkins, 1 Feb 1940  
Capt Archibald J. Hanna, 20 Jul 1940  
Capt William P. Fisher, 30 Apr 1941  
Maj William R. Clingerman, Aug 1941  
Maj Sherwood E. Buckland, 3 Jun 1942  
Maj Gordon R. Hyde, 25 Feb 1943  
Capt William Southerland, 23 May 1943  
Capt Emmett L. Kearney, 10 Dec 1943  
Maj James M. Vande Hey, 14 Apr 1944  
Maj James B. Tapp, 17 Apr 1945-unkn

Maj John G. Benner, 25 Nov 1945  
Capt Edward F. Gallup, 29 Dec 1945-unkn  
Lt Col Arlie J. Blood, Nov 1952  
Maj Robert R. Fredette, 1 Jun 1955  
Maj Herbert O. Brennan, 31 Dec 1956-unkn  
Lt Col Charles E. Simpson, 30 Jun 1958  
Maj Harry K. Barco, c. Jan 1960  
Lt Col Ernest D. Stuyvesant, 15 Feb 1961  
Maj William H. McMurray, May 1964  
Lt Col Robert R. Fredette, Oct 1964  
Lt Col William H. McMurray, 9 Jun 1966  
Lt Col Frederick C. Kyler, 1 May 1967  
Lt Col Edward A. Crimp, Mar 1970  
Lt Col Donald T. Lynch, 1 May 1970  
Lt Col Robert L. Cass, 1 Feb 1971  
Lt Col Gary L. Dryden, 25 Sep 1971 (temporary)  
Lt Col Billy D. Patton, 4 Oct 1971  
Lt Col George M. Decell III, 16 Nov 1972 (temporary), 20 Nov 1972 (permanent)  
Maj Robert R. Pedigo, 15 Jun 1973 (temporary)  
Lt Col William C. Hall, 27 Jul 1973  
Lt Col William Baechle, 20 Jan 1975  
Lt Col Sidney B. Hudson, 16 Jul 1976  
Lt Col Michael W. Harris, 14 Jul 1978  
Lt Col Glenn A. Profitt II, 7 Jul 1980  
Lt Col Jock P. Patterson, 25 Jun 1982  
Lt Col Robert O. Smith, 8 Jun 1984  
Lt Col Robert S. Hinds, 2 Jun 1956  
Lt Col Alvia W. Moore II, 23 Sep 1987  
Lt Col Victor J. White, 3 Feb 1989  
Lt Col James Fortezzo, 1-15 May 1992  
Lt Col Michael T. Cantwell, 1 Jan 1994  
Lt Col Charles M. Dodd III, 12 May 1995  
Lt Col Jon W. Armstrong, 27 Jun 1996  
Lt Col Steven R. F. Searcy, 22 May 1998  
Lt Col James R. Cody, 23 Jun 2000  
Lt Col Charles Q. Brown Jr., 17 May 2002-30 Jun 2003  
Col David L. Culbertson, May 2006  
Lt Col Ronald J. Stefanik, 17 Apr 2008  
Lt Col John E. Meyers, 2 Nov 2009  
Lt Col Mark Crowder, 2015  
Lt Col Jason S. Ohrenberger, 24 May 2017  
Lt Col Donald L. Charlton, 30 May 2019

## **HONORS**

## **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Central Pacific

Air Offensive, Japan

Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Southwest Asia

Ceasefire

Kosovo

Air Campaign

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

Japan, 7 Apr 1945

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

1 Jul 1961-30 Jun 1963

1 Jun 1966-31 May 1968

1 Jul 1968-30 Jun 1970

1 Jul 1976-30 Jun 1978

1 Jul 1979-30 Jun 1981

1 Jul 1981-30 Jun 1983

1 Jun 1989-31 May 1991

1 Jun 1991-(1 May 1992)

1 Jan-31 Dec 1994

1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

24 Mar-10 Jun 1999

1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001

27 Aug 2007-26 Aug 2009

### **EMBLEM**



On a Blue disc with a wide Yellow border a Bushmaster's head proper. (Approved, 14 Sep 1933)



On a disc Or, a bushmaster viper Proper, head coupéd facing dexter, surmounting a hurt, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "BUSHMASTERS" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "78 RECONNAISSANCE SQ" in Black letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** 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 bushmaster, or mute rattler, a native of Central America, is one of the few pugnacious reptiles greatly feared by man and beast. The Squadron has many characteristics similar to those of the viper. A bushmaster lies quietly waiting, attacking its adversary quickly and effectively by complete surprise. Similarly, the unit without warning may deal a deadly blow from protecting clouds or from out of the sun. Often, the Bushmaster stalks its prey, seeks it out from hiding, or pursues it relentlessly and upon contact, gives battle that is

ended only in victory or death. Likewise, this unit searches out, attacks and destroys its enemy. The bushmaster is always prepared, it is keenly alert, relentless in pursuit, most dangerous in battle and knows no fear. (Approved, 18 Jan 2008)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The squadron was first activated on Feb. 28, 1918, as the 78 Aero Squadron at Waco Field, Texas, but was moved to Taliaferro Field, Texas, that same day. There it was responsible for training aircrews in the JN-4, JN-6 and S-4 for other flying squadrons. The unit was redesignated Squadron "A" on July 23, 1918, and was demobilized on Nov. 13, 1918.

On April 1, 1931, another 78 Squadron was activated at France Field in the Panama Canal Zone, without any aircraft. The War Department, realizing the existence of another 78 Squadron, reconstituted and consolidated the squadrons on April 25, 1933, but then inactivated it Sept. 1, 1937.

The Squadron was reactivated at Wheeler Field, T. H. On February 1, 1940 with CPTain D. W. Jenkins as its commander and Joseph A. Messaris was First Sergeant. The first pilot was assigned March 1, 1940 and the first aircraft were a handful of the open cockpit low wing Boeing P- 26 Pea Shooters and the more modern radial engined low wing Curtis Wright P-36 Hawks along with 2 OA-10s and 2 North American AT-6 Harvard advanced trainers.. CPTain Jenkins was followed by CPTain A. J. Hanna. Under him the number of pilots grew to 26. The first fatality occurred on August 29, 1940 when Lt. Farris failed to return from a mission. On January 6, 1941 Lt. Weigel was killed as a result of an air collision with Lt. Hanes. Lt. Hanes successfully bailed out. On April 30, 1941 W. P. Fisher became commander and he was followed by W. R. Clingerman Jr. Master Sergeant Richey became First Sergeant in June 1941.

The build-up in forces and aircraft continued and the obsolete aircraft were replaced with the Curtis Wright P-40Bs. CPT Clingerman was in command on December 7, 1941 when the Squadron and other units of the 14th Pursuit Wing were attacked at Wheeler Field. All of the Squadron's 17 P-40B aircraft were either destroyed or damaged. Sergeant Morris Stacy was killed by a strafing Japanese aircraft and Corporal Vincent N. Horan was killed by a bomb fragment. As a consequence of an exceptional effort by the squadron people four P-40s were repaired and flyable on December 8th.

Many incidents, humorous in hindsight, occurred on those eventful days. Ken Sweet and were on guard duty on the flight line. They had been issued the same five old 30.06 rounds that had been used for a long time. Ken said the bullets were loose in the shell casing. They fired at the Jap planes but the rounds barely had enough energy left in them to push the projectiles out of the barrel. With the five rounds expended they tossed the rifles aside and Clyde Mortensen says that he was on the way to the flight line with CPT. Clingerman who expounded "Someone is really going to catch hell for this".

The squadron was then dispersed at Wheeler and 30 men assigned to ground defense. The rest of the squadron was put to work rehabilitating the buildings and grounds. On February 1, 1942 the squadron was moved to Kaneohe Naval Air Station and equipped with the mid-engine Allison powered Bell P-39D Aircobras. The P-39D had the same machine gun configuration as the P-40B but also had a Browning 37 mm cannon that fired through the propeller hub. The move was part of the overall effort to disperse all pursuit aircraft away from Wheeler Field. Never again would the command be caught off guard. All aircraft were henceforth dispersed, bunkered, and covered with camouflage netting when feasible. The major maintenance on the aircraft was performed at night resulting in very high (over 98%) in commission rates. Pilots for 12 aircraft performed ready room alerts each morning and evening and all day alerts every third day.

At Kaneohe the 78 aircraft were kept in bunkers along the North side of the airstrip or mat near the West or normal take off end. The bunkers had vertical concrete walls with some randomness in the placement of the openings to prevent presenting a multiple set of targets to enemy strafers. Camouflage netting was strung across the top of the bunkers. An example of the sturdiness of their construction occurred one night when the carrier air group was practicing night carrier landings. One Grumman F4F was given a wave off by the Landing Duty Officer and broke to the left as required and ran smack into one of the bunkers. By some miracle the pilot although badly injured survived. The bunker on the other hand hardly had a scratch on it. The bunkers held four P-40s. The fit was kind of tight. The fuel trucks couldn't conveniently get in to service the aircraft so two sets of 55 gallon drums were used for this purpose. The fuel of course had to be pumped by hand. When the aircraft went out on a mission the fuel truck would fill the barrels. This of course also provided a better defensive posture as well.

The air group fighter squadron when aboard the station was located at the extreme West end of the mat with the 78 next door. The operations, engineering, armament, supply etc shacks were all in the area as well as the mess hall. The ready room and operations shack were closest to the runway and right next to each other. The front end of the ready room had some chairs and a table and the back end had double-decker bunks for the pilots to use on the early morning alerts. Above the door was a bell and a bank of four lights. These were red, white, blue and yellow to correspond to the flight colors. When the operations clerk got a scramble call from Fighter Control he would switch on the bell and the lights for the flight of flights that were next up. The assistant operations clerk would step out on the porch of the shack and blow the charge call on his bugle. All this activity set off an abrupt surge in activity.

The pilots would take off on the run for the nearby bunkers or the carry all and the crew chiefs who had been sitting in the cockpits and keeping the engines warm would start the engines and the get out on the wing where he would hold the pilots parachute harness at ready for the pilot to get into. The buckling in was done quickly and the aircraft departed the bunkers for the runway or mat. The Kaneohe mat was so wide that four aircraft could comfortably take off at a time. Fighter Control started a clock when our ops clerk took the call and would stop it when the leader called in airborne on the radio. They would give the squadrons a monthly summary of these times. The 78 squadron consistently got in the air in under three minutes time and consistently led the command. Kaneohe also was a better night flying field than most of the other



squadrons enjoyed. As a consequence we were given a lot of the early morning intercepts and dawn combat air patrols (CAP).

Our scrambles for these usually occurred in pitch black darkness particularly with the stringent blackout conditions that were imposed on everyone. The CAPs always included all three flights of the tactical squadron. It was a little scary to arrive at your bunker with all four props spinning but with only the confused mixture of the dimmed red, green and white lights showing. You had to be very careful and make sure that you became properly oriented to prevent running into a prop. If you had been asleep in one of the ready room bunks when the scramble was sounded it only took one close call to give you insomnia in the ready room.

On the days when the squadron was not on an all-day alert training missions would be flown. The morning alert would usually be over with around 0800 depending on the time of the year. Most morning alerts were CAP flights or intercepts. These were followed by breakfast in the mess. The training schedule kicked in at that time. There were usually two morning missions and one in the afternoon. Their content depended on the level of training that the pilots were at. There was very little influx of new pilots into the command until late July 1942. The top leaders had decided that the European Theater would receive priority because of the dire situation faced there. A dire situation developed in the South West Pacific too. The first influx to the 7th Fighter Command were pilots who had volunteered for immediate combat in fighters. These people were in the later stages of their training at the Advanced Flying Schools. They were graduated two weeks early and sent to the 311th Fighter Squadron, 58th Fighter Group at Dale Mabry Field, Tallahassee, Florida. Other pilots joined them there. An intensive but not too effect flight schedule was the order of the day. After a month they were loaded aboard a train and sent to San Francisco where they set sail for Pearl Harbor aboard the USS Republic. Carrier Air Group 5 was on the ship as well. Upon arrival at Pearl the people were split up and sent out to the various squadrons of the 7th Fighter Command. The 78 Squadron at Kaneohe NAS received 8 of this first contingent of new pilots. They were mostly people from the Gulf Coast Training Command class of 42F.

Shortly after the arrival of the arrival of the 42F pilots a contingent of pilots from the West Coast Training Command Class of 42G joined in the command. The 78 got its share of this class which was followed shortly by another 42G group this from the Gulf Coast Training Command. The two training commands were on slightly different schedules. At the same time the 78 Squadron began receiving P-40Ks as replacements for the old P-40Bs. The K had a little more power but more importantly had three 50 caliber machine guns in each wing which greatly increased the fire power.

Over the next several months, the 78 FS moved to five bases throughout Hawaii, finally arriving at Bellows Field, Hawaii, on June 8, 1944. During that time the squadron converted to P-47s and began training for extreme long-range escort missions. That program continued through 1944 and was marked by the 78 FS's conversion to the P-51 Mustang at the end of the year.

New orders sent the squadron into combat flying combat patrol missions in support of the Marines on Iwo Jima. On April 7, 1945, the 78 FS flew its first escort missions to Japan. During the remaining months of the war the squadron flew fighter sweeps against Japanese airfields and escorted B-29s on long-range strikes.

The squadron remained on Iwo Jima until Nov. 25, 1945, at which time it returned to Bellows Field. The 78 FS then moved to Wheeler Field on Feb. 6, 1946, and inactivated on Oct. 15, 1946.

The squadron was re-designated the 78 Fighter-Interceptor Squadron and activated Nov. 1, 1952, at Royal Air Force Station Shepherds Grove, England. The squadron absorbed the members of the 116th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, an Air National Guard unit which reverted to state control, and began flying F-86 aircraft.

In April 1954, the squadron, flying F-84s, was re-designated a fighter-bomber squadron. It operated from Royal Air Force Station Sculthorpe, England, from May 1956 until May 1957, when it returned to Shepherds Grove.

The squadron was re-designated as a tactical fighter squadron in July 1958, and began flying F-101 aircraft from Royal Air Force Station Woodbridge, England.

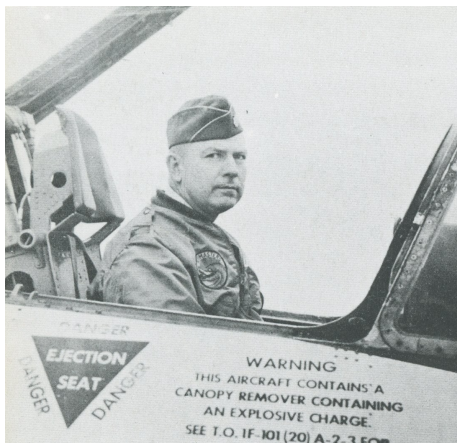
The squadron operated F-4s from 1965 until Jan. 1, 1979, when the 78 TFS began preparing to operate the A-10 Thunderbolt II "Warthog." The first A-10 arrived in June, with the squadron becoming operationally ready that November. The 78 TFS operated A-10s from Woodbridge and forward operating locations in West Germany.

The squadron was inactivated May 15, 1992. It was then transferred back to the United States and reactivated at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., on Jan. 3, 1994, flying F-16 aircraft.

On 19 March 2000, at 1251 hours local time, F16CJ S/N 93-0534 crashed about one half mile north of Kingsville Naval Air Station, TX while performing an aerial demonstration. The pilot, Major Brison B. Phillips, was fatally injured in the crash and the mishap aircraft was destroyed with the loss valued at \$18,816,787. The aircraft and pilot were assigned to the 78 FS, 20 FW, Shaw AFB, SC, and were operating as the 9th Air Force F-16 Demonstration Team. There were no civilian casualties and only minor damage to a private home and vehicles, destruction of power lines/power poles; and crop damage. The crash occurred six minutes into a scripted aerial demonstration in front of an open house/airshow audience. In the sequence leading up to the mishap, Major Phillips completed a Double Immelmann then maintained inverted flight for 21 seconds while proceeding to the pull down point for a Split-S. This inverted transition was standard procedure to allow the demonstration pilot to stay oriented to ground references and correct to the show line designated for aerobatic maneuvers in front of the crowd. There is clear and convincing evidence that Major Phillips' attention became channelized on ground references while making large rudder inputs to correct to show line. Strong winds and a complex and unfamiliar ground environment were likely contributing factors. Major Phillips did not detect or correct a significant 12-degree dive angle. He also maintained a higher than normal power

setting, initially to make up time, but lost track of the power setting while channelized on ground references and show line corrections. Failure to correct the dive angle and power setting resulted in a rapid loss of altitude from 6,300 feet AGL to 4,200 feet AGL and an acceleration from 132 knots to 444 knots. Major Phillips failed to recheck altitude and airspeed prior to initiating a full aft stick, idle power Split-S. He recognized the lower than normal altitude approaching vertical and maintained a maximum G pull until just before ground impact. There is clear and convincing evidence that channelized attention caused the MP to begin a Split-S maneuver from a position from which it could not be completed safely.

The mission of the 78 Reconnaissance Squadron is to maintain highly experienced and skilled, combat-ready citizen Airmen charged with training and equipping the Combat Air Forces to conduct Integrated and Expeditionary Combat Operations, as well as training operations. The squadron consists of Remotely Piloted Aircraft pilots, sensor operators and intelligence personnel tasked to increase the skill level and enhance mission effectiveness of the regular Air Force units within the 432nd Wing and 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev.



Lt Col Charles E. Simpson (USAF photo)

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USAF Unit Histories

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#### Sources

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