

333 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

333 Fighter-Day Squadron constituted, 13 Nov 1957
Activated, 8 Dec 1957
Redesignated 333 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1958
Redesignated 333 Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 22 Mar 1971
Inactivated, 15 Feb 1991
Redesignated 333 Fighter Squadron and activated, 1 Nov 1991

STATIONS

Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, 8 Dec 1957–4 Dec 1965
Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 8 Dec 1965–15 Oct 1970
McConnell AFB, KS, 15 Oct 1970
Luke AFB, AZ, 22 Mar 1971
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 31 Jul 1971–15 Feb 1991
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Nov 1991
Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, 1 Oct 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Eglin AFB, FL, 10 Mar 1964–15 Mar 1965

ASSIGNMENTS

4 Fighter-Day (later, 4 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957
355 Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Dec 1965
23 Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Oct 1970
58 Tactical Fighter Training Wing, 22 Mar 1971

355 Tactical Fighter (later, 355 Tactical Training) Wing, 31 Jul 1971–15 Feb 1991
602 Air Control Wing, 1 Nov 1991
355 Operations Group, 1 May 1992
4 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1994

ATTACHMENTS

4485th Composite Wing, 10 Mar 1964–c. 15 Mar 1965

WEAPON SYSTEMS

F-100, 1957–1960
F-105, 1960–1970
A-7, 1971–1976
A-10, 1976–1991
A-10, 1991

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Paul O. Hoza, 8 Dec 1957
Maj Andrew J. Chapman, 23 Jul 1960
Maj Marvin T. Johnson, 1 Sep 1960
Maj Zachery T. Forester Jr., 18 Jul 1961
Maj Andrew J. Chapman, 26 Oct 1961
Lt Col Claire P. Chennault Jr., 18 May 1962
Maj Douglas E. Whatley, 21 Feb 1964
Lt Col Kenneth L. Skeen, 9 Aug 1965
Lt Col Francis B. Clark, 14 Oct 1965
Lt Col Kenneth L. Skeen, 1 Nov 1965
Lt Col James A. Young, 1 Feb 1966
Maj Howard W. Leaf, 4 Jul 1966
Lt Col Donald K. Salmon, 16 Aug 1966
Lt Col William C. Norris, 31 Mar 1967
Lt Col Robert M. Wall, Aug 1967
Maj Balden, C. Sep 1967
Lt Col Louis D. Braun, 11 Sep 1967
Lt Col Robert L. Jondahl, 2 Aug 1968
Lt Col Richard M. Heyman Jr., 2 Dec 1968
Lt Col Richard E. Little, 11 Jul 1969
Lt Col Waymond C. Nutt, 1 Feb 1970
Lt Col William H. Lewis, 22 Aug 1970
Lt Col Theodore K. Case, 1 Jul 1971
Lt Col Carlos Gonzales, 13 Nov 1972
Lt Col Robert V. Baird, 19 Jul 1974
Lt Col Thomas B. Thompson, 25 Aug 1975
Lt Col Dale C. Tabor, 12 Aug 1977
Lt Col W. A. Veal, 12 May 1979

Lt Col Gary D. Lape, 15 May 1981
Lt Col Ralph J. Walker, 20 Aug 1982
Lt Col David A. McDonald, 10 Sep 1984
Lt Col Victor A. Hill, 19 Aug 1986
Lt Col Stephen M. McClain, 25 Sep 1987
Lt Col Bradley A. Smith, 16 Jun 1989-15 Feb 1991
Unkn, 1 Nov 1991-30 Jan 1996
Lt Col David B. Sampson, 31 Jan 1996
Lt Col Donald G. Seiler, 15 Aug 1997
Lt Col Daniel B. Bakke, 4 Jun 1999
Lt Col Billy J. Gilstrap Jr., 12 Jan 2001
Lt Col Dean Reed, 22 Nov 2002
Lt Col Mark D. Kelly, 23 Apr 2004
Lt Col William P. Acker, 10 May 2006
Lt Col Jeanie M. Leavitt, 24 Aug 2007
Lt Col Gabriel V. Green, 24 Oct 2008
Lt Col Jefferson O'donnell

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Vietnam
Vietnam Defensive
Vietnam Air
Vietnam Air Offensive
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
Tet 69/Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer/Fall 1969
Vietnam Winter/Spring 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Southwest Monsoon

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Presidential Unit Citations (Southeast Asia)
1 Jan–10 Oct 1966
11–12 Aug 1967 and 24–28 Oct 1967
12 Apr 1968–30 Apr 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

12 Oct 1966–11 Apr 1967

12 Apr 1967–11 Apr 1968

1 Jul 1969–15 Oct 1970

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

[31] Jul 1971–1 Jun 1973

1 Oct 1976–31 May 1978

1 May 1990–30 Apr 1992

1 May 1990–[15 Feb 1991]

1 Jun 1994–31 May 1996

1 Jun 1998–31 May 2000

1 Jun 2000–31 May 2002

1 Jun 2002–31 May 2003

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Apr 1966–15 Oct 1970

EMBLEM



On a disc, Red, an Air Force Blue globe, grid lines White; over all in saltire two white lances grasped in base by two Silver Gray mailed fists, outlines and details Black. (Approved, 13 Jun 1958. Approved in 1994)

MOTTO

LANCERS

OPERATIONS

In December of 1965, the 333 Tactical Fighter Squadron, known as the "Lancers" launched out of Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, arriving at Takhli with their 25 pilots on the 8th. Sufficient time remained after area checkouts for the squadron to complete more than 300 combat sorties that month. The 333 supported the 355th TFW's "Rolling Thunder" strikes into North Vietnam losing several aircraft and pilots to the increasing defenses around Hanoi in early 1966. Late in April, when the Wing was permitted to hit the Thai Nguyen rail yards, the Lancers commander (Lt.Col. Jim Young) led the strike force which destroyed most of that vital facility. Throughout the rest of 1966 and on through the end of the bombing of the North in 1968 the men of the 333 contributed significantly to making the 355th TFW "PACAF's Pride".

Although they destroyed numerous missile sites, the 333 Iron Hands were victims to heavy losses from the defenses of their incredibly hostile environment and by mid-August 1966 the original F-105F's had all been destroyed or damaged beyond repair. The resulting increase in losses to strike aircraft was halted later in the year when a new batch of Wild Weasel F-105F's arrived and when the strike birds began carrying the Electronic Countermeasures (ECM) pod with them on their missions.

In 1967, the bomb sights of the Lancers continued to fall heavily on railyards and rolling stock with thermal power plants and steel mills taking a good share of the beating. The sprawling yards and industrial center of Thai Nguyen was one of the more memorable areas devastated.

As MiG-17s and the modern MiG-21s, given to the North Vietnamese by the Russians, began to take a heavier toll, strikes were authorized on their airstrips in October. The 333 was along to get its share of enemy planes destroyed in the air and on the ground at Phuc Yen and Hoa Lac. In addition to joining wing missions the Lancers had some that were peculiarly their own. Members of the 333 were trained in the firing of the AGM-12C and launched against targets requiring exact hits. With the 3,000 pound Bullpup, they destroyed an impressive number of bridges, tunnels and cave entrances.

Not operational, 15 Oct 1970–31 Jul 1971

Pilot training, Aug 1971–Feb 1991 and May–Sep 1992.

The 333 TFS flew F-105s as part of the 355th TFW at Takhli RTAFB until the wing inactivated prior to its move to DM. The 333 TFS activated with A-7Ds on July 16, 1971. In March, 1976, it converted to A-10s becoming the first operational Air Force squadron to fly A-10s.

In April and May, 1977, four A-10s from the 333 TFTS participated in Red Flag 77-76/Irwin II, in the California desert at Fort Irwin. The exercise, the largest exercise the A-10 had participated in up to that time, demonstrated the A-10's operational effectiveness and ability to survive under battle field conditions against armor threats. The A-10s operated from the Army's Bicycle Dry Lake air strip, and coordinated their operations with Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Army aircraft. Threats were simulated on the Nellis AFB range complex, which has the capability of simulating all known Warsaw Pact anti-aircraft threats, and by the USAF Aggressor Squadron, at that time flying T-38s and F-5s operating from Nellis AFB. The A-10s were tracked with video tape machines through the optical view finders of the simulated ZSU-23 and ZSU-27 AAA sites. In 112 missions, the simulated ground fire was able to shoot down one A-10 with 23mm fire and one with a simulated SA-6. Three simulated kills were scored by the Aggressor Squadron aircraft employing Soviet Air Force Tactics. The average turn-around time for the A-10s was 15 to 20 minutes between missions. The desert conditions on the dry lakebed were often harsh, with blowing sand forcing ground crew to wear goggles and masks while working on the aircraft. The A-10 tactics consisted of a flight of two aircraft coordinating their attacks, one A-10 standing off to provide cover, trying to destroy the anti-aircraft defenses with Maverick missiles, while the second A-10 attacked the armored units with its GAU-8 cannon. The tests were successful, with the A-10 proving its ability to survive and deliver weapons in a tough, realistic combat scenario.

In August 1978, the 333 TFTS began training A-10 pilots for the 81 st TFW, which was due to accept its first European based A-10s in January, 1979. Under the program name Ready Thunder, the 92nd TFS Avengers began transition from the F-4D to the A-10. Also in August the 354th TFW became the first fully combat-ready A-10 wing in the Air Force. The conversion of the 354th, based at Myrtle Beach AFB, South Carolina, from the A-7D to the A-10 had taken 13 months.

The squadron was inactivated on February 15, 1991, reactivating with the 602nd TAIRCW at DM on November 1, 1991, and returning to the 355th Wing, still at DM on May 1, 1992. During the summer of 1994 the 333 turned its A-10s over to the 354th FS and moved to Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, as the F-15E air crew training squadron.

Getting a Taste of Deployment: Fourteen F-15Es and a large group of student pilots and weapons system officers will deploy Saturday, along with their instructors, from Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., to Savannah, Ga., to train in an unfamiliar expeditionary environment. Supported by instructors and maintenance personnel from Air Force Reserve Command's 414th Fighter Group at Seymour Johnson, these students will conduct combat tactics training over the Atlantic Ocean and on unrestricted bombing ranges along the Georgia and Florida coasts. The training is designed to test their comfort zones and prepare them for deployments upon graduation. "We don't fight wars from home, we deploy. Training like an expeditionary force exposes students and all airmen to every aspect of sustaining and executing the mission on the road," said Lt. Col. Jefferson O'Donnell, commander of Seymour Johnson's 333 Fighter Squadron that trains the F-15E aircrews. 2011

Hit by 37mm over North Vietnam. Crashed in RP-5. Maj Paul Gerard Underwood Pilot ejected. MIA. F-105D 600411 16 Mar 1966

Hit by gunfire while strafing two trucks. Crashed near Dong Hoi in RP-1. North Vietnam. 1Lt Lee Aaron Adams Pilot was KIA in the crash. F-105D 624330 19 Apr 1966

Hit by heavy 85mm near the Thai Nguyen RR yard. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 1Lt Donald William Bruch, Jr. Pilot KIA in the crash. F-105D 62304 29 Apr 1966

Hit by 37/57mm near the Yan Bay Arsenal (JCS 44). Crashed in RP-5, North Vietnam. Capt Martin H. Mahrt Pilot ejected. Rescued by a USAF HH-3C. F-105D 610135 10 May 1966

Hit by heavy 37mm while firing a Bullpup missile at a AAA site in Laos. Crashed in Laos. 1Lt Gordon L. Clouser Pilot ejected with leg injuries. Rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 591819 10 May 1966

Hit by heavy unknown gunfire while strafing a bridge. Crashed in RP-1, North Vietnam. Capt Francis James Feneley Pilot KIA in crash. F-105D 624293 11 May 1966

Hit by unknown gunfire near a RR bridge. Crashed in RP-5, North Vietnam. Capt David Bunnett Hatcher Pilot ejected. POW. Released 12 Feb 73. F-105D 610142 30 May 1966

Hit by light automatic weapons while strafing a boat. Crashed in RP-1, North Vietnam. Capt John D. Whipple Pilot ejected. Rescued by a USAF HH-3 helicopter. F-105D 591721 2 Jun 1966

Hit by heavy 37/57mm while attacking a boat near RP-1, North Vietnam. Crashed in the Gulf of Tonkin 22 NM east of Dong Col Capt James E. Bayles Pilot ejected. Rescued by a USAF HU-16. F-105D 610168 7 Jun 1966

Hit In the right wing by heavy 57-mm AAA, Crashed in RP-1, North Vietnam. 1Lt Phillip J. Kelley Pilot ejected. Rescued by a USAF HH-3 helicopter. F-105D 624377 15 Jun 1966

Hit by heavy 85mm near the Hanoi POL storage area. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Capt Murphy Neal Jones. Pilot ejected. POW. Released 12 Feb 73. F-105D 600460 29 Jun 1966

The aircraft was hit In the center fuselage by 85mm while diving on a truck park. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 1Lt Ralph Thomas Browning Pilot ejected. POW. Released 12 Feb 73. F-105D 610158 8 Jul 1966

Hit by a SAM during a strike on a POL storage site. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Capt John Henry Wendell, Jr. Pilot ejected. POW. Released 4 Mar 73. F-105D 600499 7 Aug 1966

Hit by 37/57mm while attacking a POL storage site near Thai Nguyen. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam, Capt Martin James Neuens Pilot ejected on his 27th mission. POW. Released 4 Mar 73. F-105D 624323 12 Aug 1966

Hit by 37 mm while attacking a POL storage area. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Capt Curtis Abbot Eaton Pilot was MIA on his 29th mission. F-105D 591763 14 Aug 1966

Hit by unknown gunfire while attacking a road bypass. Crashed in RP-1, North Vietnam. Maj Dale Alonzo Johnson Pilot KIA in crash. F-105D 624396 27 Oct 1966

Hit in the right wing by small arms fire over the target in Laos. Crashed in Thailand, Capt Gerald L. Hawkins Pilot ejected with minor injuries. Rescued by HH-3. F-105D 600440 15 Jan 1967

Hit by 57mm while attacking the Thai Nguyen iron Works. Crashed in North Vietnam. Capt Charles Edward Greene, Jr. Pilot ejected. POW. Released 4 Mar 73. F-105D 600443 11 Mar 1967

Hit by a SAM on an Iron Hand mission against JCS 82.24, the Hanoi transformer station. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Maj John Francis Dudash Pilot was KIA in the crash. Capt Alton Benne Meyer EWO became a POW. Released 4 Mar 73. F-105F 638277 26 Apr 1967

Hit by a MiG-21 AAM during rescap for Carbine 3. Crashed in North Vietnam. Capt Joseph S. Abbott, Jr. Pilot ejected. POW. Released 18 Feb 73. F-105D 610130 30 Apr 1967

Hit in the left wing by 37 mm while attacking trucks. Crashed in North Vietnam. Maj Charles C. Vasiliadis Pilot ejected. Rescued by a USAF HH-3 helicopter. F-105D 624405 3 May 1967

Hit by 37mm while attacking a boxcar. Crashed in Mu Gia Pass in North Vietnam. Capt Michael K McCuistion Pilot ejected and became a POW. Released 4 Mar 73. F-105D 610105 8 May 1967

Hit by a SAM while enroute to the Bac Giang RR bridge. Crashed in North Vietnam. Capt Gordon Byron "Buzz" Blackwood Pilot ejected. MIA F-105D 591723 8 May 1967

Hit by B5mm while attacking an 85mm site at the Kep RR yard. Crashed in North Vietnam. MAJ H. C. Copeland Pilot ejected and became a POW. Released F-105D 591748 17 Jul 1967

Hit by unknown gunfire near Route 137. Crashed in North Vietnam. Maj William George Bennett Pilot was MIA then KIA F-105D 624338 2 Sep 1967

Hit by 37/57-mm during the second strike on the Paul Doumer bridge. Crashed in North Vietnam. Maj Richard Eugene Smith, Jr. Pilot ejected and became a POW. Released on 14 March 1973. F-105D 581168 2 Sep 1967

Hit by a SAM while attacking the Canal de Rapides bridge North Vietnam. Maj Robert Lewis Stirm Pilot ejected and became a POW. Released 14 Mar 73. F-105D 610122 27 Oct 1967

Hit by 57-mm after attacking Phuc Yen Airfield, North Vietnam. Capt Billy Reed Sparks Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 610173 5 Nov 1967

5 Nov 67 Hit by 37mm while supporting the third attack on Phuc Ven Airfield. Crashed in North Vietnam. Maj Richard Alien Dutton Pilot ejected and became a POW. Released 14 Mar 73. Died 12 Dec 1999. Capt Earl Glenn Cobeil EWO ejected and became a POW but died in captivity. F-105F 624430

19 Nov 67 Hit by a SAM while providing Wild Weasel support to strikes in North Vietnam. Crashed in Laos. Maj Gerald C. Gustafson Pilot ejected and was rescued by an Air America helicopter. Awarded AFC. Capt Russell F. Brownlee EWO ejected and was rescued by an Air America helicopter. F-105F 638349

5 Dec 67 Hit by 37/57mm while attacking a storage area in Laos. Crashed in Laos. Maj Donald Myrick Russell Pilot was KIA F-105D 591758

6 Mar 68 Hit by gunfire while attacking e road segment in Laos. Crashed in Laos. Capt Frank E. Peck Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 624336

23 Jun 68 Hit by 37mm while attacking three trucks in RP-1, North Vietnam. Crashed at sea. Maj James I. Alder Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 591765

1 Jul 68 Hit by AAA after attacking a SAM on a carrier. Crashed 17 miles west of Dong Hoi, North Vietnam. Lt Col Jack Modica, Jr. Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF HH-3E helicopter. F-105D 610118

14 Jul 68 Hit by 37mm while strafing a truck. Crashed in North Vietnam. Maj Robert Keith Hanna Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 624367

14 Sep 68 Hit by 37/57mm while attacking three trucks. Crashed in Laos. Capt Donald M. Tribble Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 600522

30 Sep 68 Hit by 37 mm during a roll-in on a SAM site. Crashed in North Vietnam. Capt Clifford Wayne Fieszal, Pilot was MIA then KIA; Maj Howard Horton Smith EWO was MIA then KIA F-105D 638317

27 Jan 70 Hit by 37mm or small arms fire while attacking a storage area in Laos. Crashed in Laos. Maj David W. Livingston Pilot ejected and was rescued by a USAF helicopter. F-105D 591772

20 Apr 70 Hit by small arms fire while attacking two howitzers in Laos. Crashed in Laos. Capt Douglas Frank Mahan Pilot was MIA. F-105D 600451

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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