

391 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

The 391 FS "Bold Tigers" is the largest fighter squadron in the USAF, comprised of more than 80 Airmen and more than 20 F-15E aircraft. The squadron is mission ready to plan and execute all-weather/night missions including self-escort interdiction, close air support, defensive counter-air, and suppression of enemy air defenses. The "Tigers" are capable of employing the full array of U.S. Air Force weaponry including air-to-air missiles, 20mm gun, laser-guided munitions, GPS guided munitions, general purpose munitions, and stand-off weapons.

LINEAGE

391 Fighter Squadron (Single-Engine) constituted, 24 May 1943
Activated, 1 Jun 1943
Redesignated 391 Fighter Squadron, Single-Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 20 Aug 1946
Redesignated 391 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 15 Nov 1952
Activated, 1 Jan 1953
Redesignated 391 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1958
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1959
Activated, 30 Apr 1962
Organized, 8 May 1962
Inactivated, 28 Feb 1971
Activated, 1 Jul 1971
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1990
Redesignated 391 Fighter Squadron, 1 Mar 1992
Activated, 11 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Richmond AAB, VA, 1 Jun 1943
Bluethenthal Field, NC, 9 Aug 1943
Richmond AAB, VA, 6 Nov–17 Dec 1943
Membury England, 12 Jan 1944
Thruxton, England, 2 Mar 1944
St Pierre du Mont, France, 17 Jun 1944
Dreux, France, 24 Aug 1944
Laon/Couvron, France, 7 Sep 1944
Asch, Belgium, 26 Nov 1944
Munster/Handorf, Germany, 21 Apr 1945
Bayreuth/Bindlach, Germany, c. 25 Jun 1945
Fritzlar, Germany, 11 Sep 1945–20 Aug 1946
Alexandria (later England) AFB, LA, 1 Jan 1953–1 Apr 1959
Etain, France, 8 May 1962–Jul 1963
Holloman AFB, NM, 12 Jul 1963–26 Jan 1966
Cam Ranh Bay AB, South Vietnam, 29 Jan 1966
Misawa AB, Japan, 22 Jul 1968–28 Feb 1971
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 1 Jul 1971–1 Jul 1990
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 11 Mar 1992

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Aviano AB, Italy, 6 Dec 1956–11 Jun 1957
Taegu AB, South Korea, 22 Jul–7 Oct 1968, 7 Feb–5 Mar 1969, 1 May–2 Jun 1969, 1–30 Aug 1969, 1–15 Feb 1970, and 15–29 Mar 1970
Kunsan AB, South Korea, 26 Apr–10 May 1970, 7–21 Jun 1970, 30 Aug–12 Sep 1970, 4–18 Oct 1970, 1–15 Nov 1970, 13–19 Dec 1970, and 1–15 Feb 1971

ASSIGNMENTS

366 Fighter Group, 1 Jun 1943–20 Aug 1946
366 Fighter-Bomber Group, 1 Jan 1953
366 Fighter-Bomber (later, 366 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 25 Sep 1957–1 Apr 1959
United States Air Forces in Europe, 30 Apr 1962
366 Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 May 1962
2 Air Division, 26 Jan 1966
Seventh Air Force, 1 Apr 1966
12 Tactical Fighter Wing, 23 Jun 1966
475 Tactical Fighter Wing, 22 Jul 1968–28 Feb 1971
347 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1971
366 Tactical Fighter Wing, 31 Oct 1972–1 Jul 1990
366 Operations Group, 11 Mar 1992

ATTACHMENTS

21 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 6 Dec 1956–11 Jun 1957
12 Tactical Fighter Wing, 26 Jan 1966–22 Jun 1966

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47, 1943-1946

F-51, 1953

F-86, 1953-1955

F-84, 1954-1958

F-100, 1957-1959

F-84, 1962-1965

F-4, 1965-1971

F-111, 1971-1990

F-15E, 1992

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Carroll B. McElroy

Lt Col John W. Brand, #1955

Lt Col Roger T. Turcotte

Lt Col Karl R. Von Kessel

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Vietnam

Vietnam Defensive

Vietnam Air

Vietnam Air Offensive

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II

Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III

Vietnam Air/Ground

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Normandy, 11 Jul 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

26 Jan–30 May 1966

1 Jun 1966–31 May 1967

1 Jun 1967–31 May 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

17 Apr 1974–15 Apr 1976

16 Apr 1976–27 Mar 1978

18 Aug–16 Sep 1976

1 Apr 1983–31 Mar 1985

1 Mar 1989–[1 Jul 1990]

Cited in the Orders of the Day, Belgian Army

6 Jun–30 Sep 1944

1 Oct–17 Dec 1944

18 Dec 1944–15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Apr 1966–[22 Jul] 1968

EMBLEM



391 Fighter-Bomber Squadron emblem: On a light blue disc, a brown ape astride a red bomb, casting a yellow lightning bolt. (Approved, 24 Sep 1954)



Sable, a tiger face Proper eyed Azure; all within a diminished bordure Or. (Approved, 8 Jun 1995; replaced emblem approved, 21 Mar 1978)

MOTTO

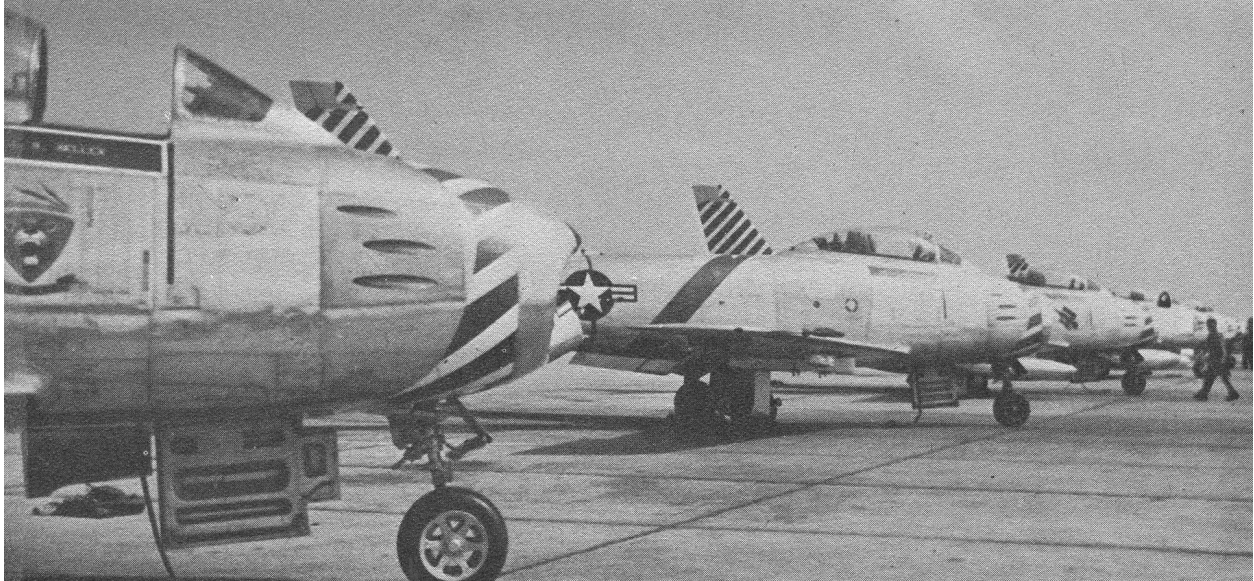
BOLD TIGERS

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 14 Mar 1944–3 May 1945.



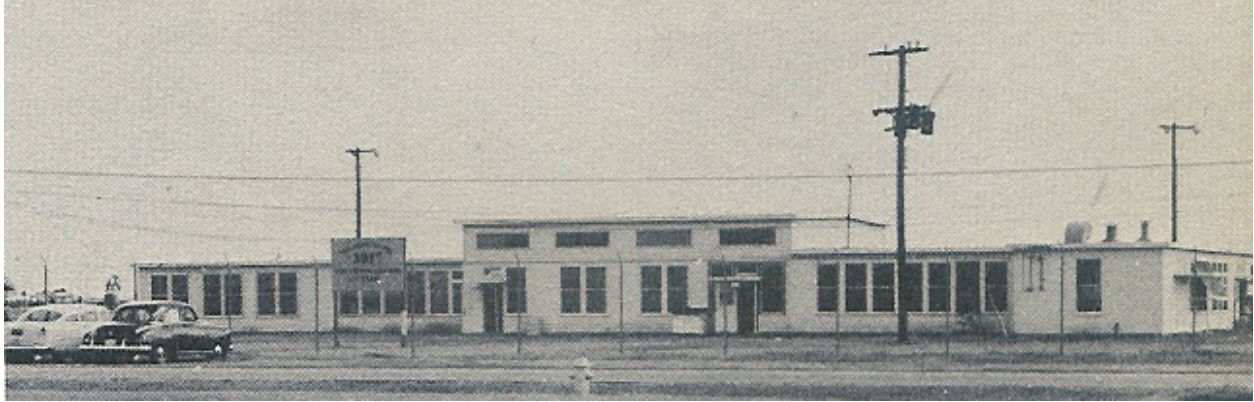
Lt Col John W. Brand



391 Fighter-Bomber Squadron F-86s



Repairing a flight helmet in the personnel equipment section, 1955



Squadron headquarters, 1955

Combat in Southeast Asia, 2 Feb 1966–21 Jul 1968. Air defense in Korea and Japan, 22 Jul 1968–14 Feb 1971.

F-111 67-0073 While assigned to the 391st TFS, 366th TFW, crashed and was destroyed on Jan 19, 1982, 11 miles northwest of Mountain Home AFB heading south west. The crash was caused by an explosion and fire in the engine bay. This was caused by a failure of a patch on the forward fuselage (F-2) fuel tank which resulted in the spill of a massive amount of JP4 fuel into the right engine bay. The crew could not regain control after the rudder went "hardover due to burn-through of the rudder controls. The aircrew ejected inverted and at less than 2000 feet above the ground. The capsule did a slow roll after leaving the aircraft and landed upright. The WSO was briefly hospitalized for ejection spinal compression injuries.

The 391st TFSq used the same hangar and base operations facilities the 166th TFSq had used. Its primary mission during 1962-63 was close air support for Seventh Army ground forces and the Emergency War Plan, (Automatic Launch). The wing air defense mission involved keeping four fully armed F-84Fs on 24-hour alert. Each pilot had four or more primary targets committed to memory, and was frequently tested on how to execute the Automatic Launch Plan. The 391st began sending eight F-84Fs down to Wheelus for bombing and gunnery training immediately after pilots were checked out in flying the aircraft. The 391st pilots achieved very good high and low angle bombing scores on the range. The squadron was also fully involved during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962; it assumed a total alert posture at Etain with eighteen fully armed F-84Fs on round-the-clock alert for the two weeks. Close air support during GRAND SLAM II in May 1963 saw the 391st flying excellent support missions with the First French Army, the 1st and 3d Corps German Army, and the U.S. Seventh Army. The squadron flew 2,385 hours on 1,463 sorties from 1 January until 15 June 1963.

Maintenance training continued throughout this flying program in order to upgrade aircraft repair-men; a Republic Aircraft tech rep was assigned to Etain in October to assist in this training. The 391st lost one F-84F in February; the pilot ejected safely from an uncontrollable spin, and no property was damaged. During this period the F-84F engines were being improved into J-65-7D models; this -7D engine was reworked at the Curtiss-Wright factory, and in-flight engine failures were reduced. In April, the F-84Fs were grounded for ten days due to cracked

tailpipes; new tailpipes were flown to France, and the Streaks were back on alert by 15 April. Twenty 391st pilots completed their water survival training in RCAF Grostenquin's swimming pool prior to flying the North Atlantic. The 7368th CSGp continued to operate the base and support the squadron and assigned tenant units during the twelve months the 391st was based at Etain.

The 391st TFSq departed Etain on 16 July 1963, when the 366th Wing moved to Holloman AFB, New Mexico. The 7368th CSGp manning was reduced, as Etain changed into a standby base, and additional support came from the 7544th Support Group at Toul. A French contractor continued to maintain base real property.

F-15E Crash Claims Life of Crew Member: Capt. Francis D. Imlay, 31, of Vacaville, Calif., died Wednesday when his F-15E crashed approximately 15 miles outside of a base in Southwest Asia, announced the Pentagon. Imlay's fellow crew member was injured in the mishap, stated Air Forces Central officials in a release. Emergency response personnel brought the injured crew member to a military medical facility for treatment of minor injuries, they said. Imlay was assigned to the 391st Fighter Squadron at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. "This is obviously a very sad day for the Gunfighters, as we mourn the loss of one of our warriors," said Col. Ron Buckley, commander of Mountain Home's 366th Fighter Wing, the squadron's parent unit. Buckley added, "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this time." The cause of the incident is under investigation. More details will be released as they become available, said the AFCENT officials. 2012

On 3 May 2012 at approximately 0718Z/1118L the mishap aircraft (MA), an F-15E, tail number (T/N) 90-0254, forward deployed with the 391st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron (EFS) to the 380th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW), Southwest Asia, impacted the ground approximately 65 nautical miles south of the host nation Air Base (AB). The mishap sortie was a training mission deployed under a Theater Support Package to the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). The crash occurred in an unpopulated area and the mishap aircraft was destroyed with a loss valued at \$45,538,495.76. The mishap crew (MC) safely ejected from the aircraft with no injuries and was quickly recovered by host nation search and rescue forces. No known civilian injuries resulted from the mishap, and only minimal damage to a few irrigation lines occurred. There was little media interest following the initial reports of the mishap. On 3 May 2012 at 0629Z/1029L, the MA took off from the host nation AB, for a routine training sortie simulating enemy fighter tactics (Red Air) against friendly forces (Blue Air). The MC was flying as a wingman in a package of six F-15Es acting as Red Air. The MC's objective was employment of notional ordnance on a point defended by Blue Air. At 1050L the training profile began. At 1116L the mishap pilot (MP) initiated a climb from 2400 feet (ft.) to 10,000 ft. to meet airspace requirements and advanced the throttle to the maximum afterburner setting. Soon after, the MC heard a loud bang and received indications of an overheat condition in the right engine and shut it down. Near simultaneously, the MC began to experience significant uncommanded right roll and yaw of the aircraft. At 1117L, the MP jettisoned all external aircraft stores in an attempt to improve aircraft controllability; this had no apparent effect and the MP continued to struggle with the aircraft. Quickly following, the MC received indications of

a fire in the right engine and Aircraft Mounted Accessory Drive. The MP employed the fire extinguisher system into the right engine. The MA then experienced complete electrical system and communications failure. With the aircraft at the prescribed uncontrolled bailout altitude and fire continuing to burn in the right engine compartment the MP used hand signals to command bailout. The MC safely ejected from the MA. The MA crashed 10-20 seconds later. The Accident Board President found by clear and convincing evidence the cause of the mishap was catastrophic failure of the right engine. The cause of the engine failure, by clear and convincing evidence, was a rare ignition of the titanium components within the engine resulting in an extremely destructive fire. This fire led to associated failure of critical hydraulic systems, which by a preponderance of the evidence, was a substantially contributing factor to the mishap. The loss of the right engine and critical hydraulic systems made the aircraft uncontrollable and resulted in the eventual crash.

On Wednesday, 28 March 2012 at approximately 1603 Zulu (2003 local time), the Mishap Aircraft (MA), an F-15E, Tail Number 90-0235, impacted the ground approximately 18 nautical miles west, southwest of the deployed operating location of the 391st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron in Southwest Asia. The Mishap Weapon Systems Officer (MWSO) initiated ejection for the Mishap Crew (MC) and ejected safely with only minor injuries. The Mishap Pilot (MP) was fatally injured when his ejection sequence was interrupted by contact with a 377-foot tower that was part of a large radio tower array. The MA was destroyed after contacting the radio tower and subsequently the ground. The MA loss is valued at \$47,094,662.60. The MA caused damage to Host Nation property. The MC was participating in a large force exercise as the flight lead of a two-ship of F-15Es in a strike package of approximately 27 aircraft. At the conclusion of the tactical portion of the mission, the MC removed their night vision goggles (NVGs) and proceeded back to the base. Below 10,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL), blowing dust and sand obscured the horizon (with or without NVGs). At approximately 3,100 feet MSL, five degrees nose low and in a wings-level attitude, the MP incorrectly interpreted the visual scene in front of him and began a series of abrupt maneuvers that ultimately resulted in him rolling the MA into an inverted attitude 1,800 feet above ground level and 25 degrees nose low. Due to the lack of any significant topographical features, the expected lack of cultural lighting, the reduced visibility and the lack of a discernable horizon, the MP became disoriented by the cultural lighting in the vicinity of the mishap site and incorrectly perceived that the MA was inverted. This misperception caused the MP to roll the MA into a truly inverted attitude, at which time the MWSO became convinced the MP had become disoriented and took control of the MA. After attempting to recover the MA, the MWSO initiated ejection for the MC. The evidence suggests that the MP did not have the electronic attitude director indicator (EADI), the primary source of aircraft attitude, up on any of his cockpit displays at the time of the mishap. The MP was likely using his head-up display and the visual environment as the source of his attitude. Subsequently, visual stimuli from light sources on the ground caused the MP to misinterpret his attitude and because this illusion was so strong, he initially did not make any attempt to call up the EADI or confirm his attitude with his standby instruments. Instead, he maneuvered the MA in accordance with his mistaken visual interpretation of his attitude and flew the MA into an inverted position. By not having the EADI in his crosscheck, the MP lacked a vital instrument that could have helped him avoid or overcome his disorientation. In addition,

the combination of environmental and procedural aspects of the approach to the base created an environment where the MP was very susceptible to a visually induced illusion and offered a very small window of opportunity with which to correct his misperception. The Accident Investigation Board (AIB) President found by clear and convincing evidence that the cause of the mishap was the MP becoming spatially disoriented due to a visual illusion during his nighttime recovery to his deployed operating location. Further, the AIB President found by a preponderance of the evidence that the following factors substantially contributed to the mishap: (1) the lack of an effective instrument crosscheck by the MP and (2) a combination of the environmental and procedural factors present on the approach to the base.



USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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