

33 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

33 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) established, 20 Nov 1940

Activated, 15 Jan 1941

Redesignated 33 Fighter Group, 15 May 1942

Inactivated, 8 Dec 1945

Activated, 20 Aug 1946

Redesignated 33 Fighter Interceptor Group, 20 Jan 1950

Inactivated, 6 Feb 1952

Redesignated 33 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955

Activated, 18 Aug 1955

Inactivated, 18 Aug 1957

33 Tactical Group established and activated, 19 Jun 1963

Organized, 8 Jul 1963

Discontinued and inactivated on 8 Jul 1965

33 Fighter Group (Air Defense) and 33 Tactical Group consolidated and redesignated 33 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985

Redesignated 33 Operations Group and activated, 1 Dec 1991

STATIONS

Mitchel Field, NY, 15 Jan 1941

Philadelphia, PA, 13 Dec 1941-Oct 1942

Langley Field, VA, 12 Oct 1942-27 Oct 1942

Port Lyautey, French Morocco, 10 Nov 1942
Casablanca, French Morocco, c. 13 Nov 1942
Telergma, Algeria, 24 Dec 1942
Thelepte, Tunisia, 7 Jan 1943
Youks-les-Bains, Algeria, 8 Feb 1943
Telergma, Algeria, 20 Feb 1943
Berteaux, Algeria, 2 Mar 1943
Ebba Ksour, Tunisia, 12 Apr 1943
Menzel Temime, Tunisia, 20 May 1943
Sousse, Tunisia, 9 Jun 1943
Pantelleria, 19 Jun 1943
Licata, Sicily, 18 Jul 1943
Paestum, Italy, 13 Sep 1943
Santa Maria, Italy, 18 Nov 1943
Cercola, Italy, 1 Jan-Feb 1944
Karachi, India, 20 Feb 1944
Shwangliu, China, 18 Apr 1944
Punchacheng, China, 9 May 1944
Nagaghuli, India, 3 Sep 1944
Sahmaw, Burma, 26 Dec 1944
Piardoba, India, 4 May-15 Nov 1945
Camp Shanks, NY, 7-8 Dec 1945
Neubiberg, Germany, 20 Aug 1946
Bad Kissengen, 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 1948-6 Feb 1952
Otis AFB, MA, 18 Aug 1955-18 Aug 1957
Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam, 8 Jul 1963-8 Jul 1965
Eglin AFB, FL, 1 Dec 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

7 Pursuit Wing, 15 Jan 1941
1 Interceptor (later, I Interceptor, I Fighter) Command, 2 Oct 1941
Philadelphia Air Defense Wing, 11 Aug 1942
XII Air Support Command, Nov 1942
XII Fighter Command, 6 Dec 1942
XII Air Support Command, 13 Jan 1943
XII Air Force Service Command, 18 Feb 1943
XII Bomber Command, 1 Mar 1943
47 Bombardment Wing, 3 Mar 1943
XII Air Support Command, 14 Mar 1943
3 Air Defense (later, 64th Fighter) Wing, 24 Jul 1943

XII Air Support Command, 21 Dec 1943 (under operational control of 64 Fighter Wing, 21 Dec 1943-Feb 1944)

AAF India-Burma Sector, 20 Feb 1944

Fourteenth Air Force, 15 Apr 1944

312 Fighter Wing, 11 May 1944

Tenth Air Force, 24 Aug 1944-Nov 1945

70 Fighter Wing, 20 Aug 1946

Strategic Air Command, 25 Aug 1947

Eighth Air Force, 16 Sep 1947

33 Fighter (later, 33 Fighter Interceptor) Wing, 5 Nov 1947-6 Feb 1952

4707th Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955

33 Fighter Wing, 18 Oct 1956-18 Aug 1957

Pacific Air Forces, 19 Jun 1963

2 Air Division, 8 Jul 1963-8 Jul 1965

33 Fighter Wing, 1 Dec 1991

ATTACHMENTS

CBI Air Forces Training Command, 5 Mar-14 Apr 1944

509 Bombardment Wing, 17 Nov 1947-15 Nov 1948

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-39, 1941

P-40, 1941-1944

P-38, 1944-1945

P-47, 1944-1945

P-47, 1947-1948

F-84, 1948

F-86, 1949-1952

C-54, 1963-1965

RB-26, 1963-1964

RB-57, 1963-1965

RF-101, 1963-1965

U-3B, 1963-1965

VC-47, 1964-1965

VC-123, 1963-1965

F-15, 1991

COMMANDERS

Maj Minthorne W. Reed, c. Jan 1941

Col Elwood R. Quesada, 7 Oct 1941

Col William W. Momyer, 29 Jun 1942

Col Loring F. Stetson Jr., 17 Oct 1943

Lt Col Oliver G. Cellini, 7 Jun 1944

Col David D. Terry Jr., 9 Sep 1944

Col Frank L. Dunn, 2 Mar 1945-Unkn
Col Barton M. Russell, 20 Aug 1946
Lt Col Albert A. Cory, C. 1946
Col William H. Blanchard, 1947
Col Gwen G. Atkinson, Jan 1948
Lt Col Woodrow W. Korges, 4 Mar 1949
Col Charles H. Macdonald, 29 Jul 1949
Col Harrison R. Thyng, 15 Jun 1950
Lt Col Willard W. Millikan, Aug 1951-6 Feb 1952
Col Fred G. Hook Jr., 1955
Col David B. Tudor, 1957-unkn
Col Richard C. Bender, 8 Jul 1963
Col Frank H. Wilcox Jr., 22 Feb 1964
Col George Budway, 16 May-8 Jul 1965
Col Thomas W. Dobson Jr., 2 Dec 1991
Col T. Michael Mosely, 23 Oct 1992
Col John D.W. Corley, 19 Jan 1994
Col James G. Boehm, 7 Aug 1995
Col David A. Deptula, 3 Oct 1995
Col Dennis G. Krembel, Feb 1997
Col Mark W. Debolt, 5 Mar 1999
Col Thomas A. McCarthy, 9 Feb 2001
Col Jay T. Denney, 13 Dec 2002
Capt Michal Saunders, USN
Col James J. Ravella, 2 Oct 2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Algeria-French Morocco
Tunisia; Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Air Combat, EAME
India-Burma
Central Burma
China Defensive

Vietnam
Vietnam Advisory
Vietnam Defensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
Central Tunisia, 15 Jan 1943

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

2 Dec 1991-31 Mar 1992

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

1 Jun 1998-31 May 1999

EMBLEM



33 Tactical Group emblem

33 Fighter Group emblem: Azure, on a pale nebuly or a sword point to chief in pale of the field, flammant gules, all within a border of the second. (Approved, 21 Feb 1942)



MOTTO

FIRE FROM THE CLOUDS

OPERATIONS

Trained with P-39s in 1941, but soon changed to P-40s and served as part of the defense force for the east coast after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The group moved to North Africa as part of the invasion force on 8 Nov 1942 and operated with Twelfth Air Force in the Mediterranean theater until Feb 1944, providing close support for ground forces, and bombing and strafing personnel concentrations, port installations, fuel dumps, bridges, highways, and rail lines. The 33d received a DUC for action on 15 Jan 1943 when enemy aircraft attempted to knock out the group's base in Tunisia. The group drove off the enemy's escort and destroyed most of its bombers. It took part in the reduction of Pantelleria and flew patrol missions while Allied troops landed after surrender of the enemy's garrison. It also participated in the invasion and conquest of Sicily by supporting landings at Salerno, southern Italy, and the beachhead at Anzio. Moving to India in Feb 1944, the group trained with P-38s and P-47s. It then moved to China where it continued training and flew patrol and intercept missions. Returning to India in Sep 1944, it flew dive-bombing and strafing missions in Burma until the Allied campaigns in that area had been completed. From Aug 1946, the 33d served as part of the US occupation force in Germany until transferred back to the US, less personnel and equipment in Aug 1947.

Moving to New Mexico, it was remanned and equipped with P-51s in Sep 1947, transitioned to F-84s in Jun 1948, and by mid-Nov, moved to the east coast. There it trained to maintain tactical proficiency and participated in exercises and aerial demonstrations. In Feb 1949, transitioned to F-86s and in Dec assumed an air defense mission, providing air defense in the northeastern US until inactivation in Feb 1952. Again, it provided air defense in northeastern US, Aug 1955-Aug 1957.

In South Vietnam, the group was equipped primarily with cargo aircraft, C-54, U-3B, VC-47, and VC-123. Its mission was to maintain and operate base support facilities at Tan Son Nhut AB, supporting the 2d Air Division and subordinate units by performing reconnaissance of Vietnam from various detachments flying RB-26, RB-57, and RF-101 aircraft, Jul 1963-Jul 1965.

In the years following Vietnam, the 33 TFW completed several training operations. In 1979, two years of planning and preparation culminated with the wing's official conversion to the F-15 "Eagle." The Nomads' last F-4 departed Eglin on 25 May ending its 14 years of service to the wing and ushering in a new era for the Nomads.

The first test of the wing's new aircraft came in October 1983 when President Ronald Reagan initiated Operation URGENT FURY. Anti-American elements seized control of the tiny country of Grenada off the coast of Venezuela endangering the lives of Americans, mostly medical students. Nomads flew combat air patrols and air intercept missions.

Six years later, in December 1989, the Nomads patrolled the skies over Panama during Operation JUST CAUSE. Its objectives were to protect U.S. lives and key sites, capture General Noriega, and neutralize the Panamanian Defense Force. While 33d pilots never engaged the enemy during these conflicts, their presence ensured the success of both missions and proved the Nomads were prepared to face any foe.

From its activation in Dec 1991, as part of the 33d Fighter Wing, it deployed aircraft and personnel to Saudi Arabia, Canada, the Caribbean, South America, Jamaica, Iceland, Italy, and Puerto Rico and participated in operations SOUTHERN WATCH, CORONET MACAW; RESTORE HOPE, SUPPORT JUSTICE IV; UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. These included combat as well as deployments to assist in the US drug war.

Entering its sixth straight year in Southwest Asia, deployments in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH became a routine event for the Nomads.

On the night of 25 June 1996, the terrorist bombing of Khobar Towers forever shattered that routine. Nineteen airmen lost their lives that evening, 12 from the 33d Fighter Wing. The 12 Nomads were members of the 58th Fighter Squadron, 60th Fighter Squadron, 33d Logistics Group, 33d Maintenance Squadron, and 33d Operations Support Squadron. They represented a cross-section of the wing as crew chiefs, expeditors, weapons loaders, mechanics, production superintendents, program managers, and technicians. An outpouring of sympathy and support from the base and local communities met the Nomads as they returned to Eglin. On 30 June 1996, a memorial was held in King Hangar to honor the lives of the 12 men who died.

In 1998, the 33d supported Operation NORTHERN WATCH in Incirlik, Turkey, marking the wing's first patrol of the no-fly zone over northern Iraq.

Not immune to the military draw down of the 1990s, the AF inactivated the 59 FS with Special Order GB-66 on 15 April 1999. The wing lost six aircraft and consolidated the remaining aircraft into the 58 FS and 60 FS. Originally selected for inactivation in 1997, Air Force officials delayed the decision in recognition of the Nomads' connection with Khobar Towers. The 59 FS reactivated as the 59th Test Evaluation Squadron (TES) by Special Order GB-5 effective on 3 December 2004 at Nellis AFB, Nevada. The 59 TES falls under the 53d Test Management Group (TMG), Eglin AFB Florida. After flying their last sortie in December 2008, the 60th Fighter Squadron was placed in a "caretaker" status, less personnel and equipment on 8 January 2009. This status reserved the squadron thus, upon arrival of the F-35

aircraft; the 33d Fighter Wing would be able to maintain a numerically numbered set of squadrons: 58, 59, and 60th Fighter Squadrons.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 13 Jul 2024

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *26th Air Division, Defense. 1956.*

Unit yearbook. *32nd Air Division. 1955.*