

44 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

44 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) Constituted, 22 Nov 1940
Activated, 1 Jan 1941
Redesignated 44 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942
Redesignated 44 Fighter Squadron, Two Engine, 26 Jan 1944
Redesignated 44 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 6 May 1946
Redesignated 44 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 23 Dec 1949
Redesignated 44 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Redesignated 44 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1958
Redesignated 44 Fighter Squadron on 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Wheeler Field, TH, 1 Jan 1941
Bellows Field, TH, 7 Nov 1941
Wheeler Field, TH, 12 Dec 1941
Kaneohe, TH, 27 Dec 1941
Wheeler Field, TH, 25 Jan 1942
Bellows Field, TH, 23 Jun–23 Oct 1942
Efate, New Hebrides, 7 Nov 1942 (air echelon operated from Guadalcanal, 20 Dec 1942–20 Mar 1944)
Espiritu Santo, 25 Oct 1943 (air echelon operated from Treasury Island, Solomon Islands, 20 Mar–25 Apr 1944, and from Guadalcanal, 11 May–16 Jul 1944)

Guadalcanal, 17 Jul 1944

Cape Opmarai, New Guinea, 23 Aug 1944 (air echelon operated from Morotai, 7 Nov 1944–16 Jan 1945)

Lingayen, Luzon, 13 Jan 1945

San Jose, Mindoro, 26 Feb 1945 (air echelon operated from Palawan, 26 Apr–13 May 1945)

Zamboanga, Mindanao, 4 May–Nov 1945

Puerto Princesa, Palawan, 10 Nov 1945

Florida Blanca, Luzon, 17 Jul 1946

Clark Field (later, AFB), Luzon, 3 Oct 1947

Kadena AB, Okinawa, 15 Jul 1955

Korat RTAFB, Thailand 25 Apr 1967

Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 10 Oct 1969–15 Mar 1971

Kadena AB, Okinawa (later, Japan), 15 Mar 1971

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Yonton Auxiliary AB, Okinawa, 11 Nov–11 Dec 1954

Tao Yuan AB, Formosa, 27 Jan–17 Feb 1955

Tao Yuan AB, Formosa, 3–30 Sep 1955

Pyongtaek AB, South Korea, 15–18 Apr 1956

Korat RTAFB, Thailand, 18 Dec 1964–25 Feb 1965, 21 Apr–22 Jun 1965, and 10–29 Oct 1965

Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 1–27 Feb 1969

Kunsan AB, South Korea, 2 Apr–2 Jun 1972 and 28 Jul–8 Sep 1972

Ching Chaun Kang AB, Taiwan, 6 Nov 1972–5 Aug 1973, 26 Aug–16 Sep 1973, 7–28 Oct 1973, 18 Nov–9 Dec 1973, 30 Dec 1973–20 Jan 1974, 10 Feb–2 Mar 1974, 23 Mar–13 Apr 1974, 4–25 May 1974, 15 Jun–6 Jul 1974, 27 Jul–16 Aug 1974, 5 Sep–17 Oct 1974, 30 Nov 1974–9 Jan 1975, and 20 Feb–10 Apr 1975).

ASSIGNMENTS

18 Pursuit (later, 18 Fighter) Group, 1 Jan 1941

318 Fighter Group, 20 Oct 1942

South Pacific Area, 1 Dec 1942

Thirteenth Air Force, 4 Jan 1943

18 Fighter (later, 18 Fighter-Bomber) Group, 30 Mar 1943

18 Fighter-Bomber (later, 18 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 1 Oct 1957

388 Tactical Fighter Wing, 25 Apr 1967

355 Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Oct 1969

Thirteenth Air Force, 10 Dec 1970

18 Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Mar 1971

18 Tactical Fighter Group, 1 May 1978

18 Tactical Fighter Wing, 11 Feb 1981

18 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1991

ATTACHMENTS

18 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 25 Jul–30 Nov 1950

6200 Air Base Wing, 1 Dec 1950–30 Jan 1953
Thirteenth Air Force, 31 Jan 1953–10 Nov 1954 and 11 Dec 1954–4 Jan 1955
6200 Air Base Wing, 5–27 Jan 1955
Air Task Group Fifth, Provisional, 27 Jan–16 Feb 1955
6200 Air Base Wing, 17 Feb–14 Jul 1955
Air Task Force 13, Provisional, 3–30 Sep 1955
314 Air Division, 15–18 Apr 1956
18 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 1 Feb–30 Sep 1957
2 Air Division, 18 Dec 1964–25 Feb 1965, 21 Apr–23 Jun 1965, and 19–29 Oct 1965
355 Tactical Fighter Wing, 10–14 Oct 1969
3 Tactical Fighter Wing, 2 Apr–2 Jun 1972 and 28 Jul–8 Sep 1972
327 Air Division, 6 Nov 1972–5 Aug 1973, 26 Aug–16 Sep 1973, 7–28 Oct 1973, 18 Nov–9
Dec 1973, 30 Dec 1973–20 Jan 1974, 10 Feb–2 Mar 1974, 23 Mar–13 Apr 1974, 4–25 May
1974, 15 Jun–6 Jul 1974, 27 Jul–16 Aug 1974, 5 Sep–17 Oct 1974, 30 Nov 1974–9 Jan 1975,
and 20 Feb–10 Apr 1975

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-40, 1941–1942, 1943
P-38, 1943–1946
P (later, F)-51, 1946–1947, 1948–1950
P-47, 1946–1947, 1947–1948
P-80, 1946–1947, 1949–1954
F-86, 1954–1957
F-100, 1957–1964
F-105, 1963–1966, 1967–1970
F-4, 1971–1980
F-15, 1979

COMMANDERS

2nd Lt A. C. Newton, 1 Jan 1941
Capt J. L. Holtner, 15 Jan 1941
Capt Kenneth P. Bergquist, 27 Feb 1941
Capt Arthur R. Kingham, 3 Oct 1941
1lt J. L. McBride, Jan 1942
Capt E. W. Stewart, 23 Aug 1942
Maj Kermit A. Tyler, 9 Sep 1942
Maj John E. Little, 25 May 1943
Maj Robert B. Westbrook, 25 Sep 1943
Capt Joseph J. Lesicka, 21 Jan 1944
Maj Peyton S. Mathis Jr., 6 Feb 1944
Lt Col Charles M. Walton Jr., 7 Jun 1944
Capt Robert J. Connolly, 21 Nov 1944
Lt Col Charles M. Walton Jr., 7 Dec 1944
Capt Joseph J. Lesicka, 1 Jun 1945

Maj Robert Dow, 4 Aug 1945
Capt Lloyd D. Wineger, 23 Mar 1946
Maj Robert E. Dawson, 3 Apr 1946
Maj Franklin H. Scott, 5 Dec 1946-24 Mar 1947
None (Not Manned), 25 Mar-2 Oct 1947
Maj Franklin H. Scott, 3 Oct 1947
Maj John W. Singleton, 9 Feb 1948
Lt Col Andrew R. Schindler, 5 Feb 1949
Lt Col James D. C. Robinson, 10 Oct 1949
Maj Robert Dow, 17 Oct 1949
Lt Col Robert J. Leimbacher, 24 Jul 1950
Maj Charles H. Gipson, C. 15 Aug 1950
Maj Charles E. Mcgee, 25 Jun 1951
Maj Jack S. Wilson, 6 May 1953
Maj Don L. Robinson, 25 Jul 1954
Lt Col Joseph E. Andres, 22 Jan 1955
Maj Burton S. Shiner Jr., 22 Jul 1955
Lt Col Carleton W. Rogers, 19 Nov 1955
Lt Col Lucien K. Cox, 24 Oct 1956
Maj James B. Richards Jr., 25 Mar 1958
Lt Col Joe T. Wilkerson, 20 Nov 1958
Lt Col Roy L. Bowlin Jr., 5 Feb 1959
Maj Woodfin M. Sullivan, 30 Sep 1959
Lt Col Toive L. Akkola, 5 Jun 1962
Lt Col Grant R. Smith, 15 Jun 1963
Lt Col William B. Craig, 16 May 1964
Lt Col Richard M. Baughn, 30 Jun 1965
Lt Col Gerald F. Fitzgerald, 1 May 1966
Maj Ronald E. Johnson, 1 Oct 1966
Capt Roger P. Scheer, 31 Dec 1966-24 Apr 1967 (Acting)
Lt Col Kenneth F. Hite, 25 Apr 1967
Lt Col Fred A. Treyz, 18 May 1967
Lt Col James E. Mcinerney Jr., 1 Oct 1967
Lt Col Robert A. Evans, 2 Nov 1967
Lt Col Guy J. Sherrill, 5 May 1968
Lt Col Herbert L. Sherrill, 16 Mar 1969
Lt Col Harley N. Wills, 10 Oct 1969
Lt Col Edward D. Moriarty, 13 Feb 1970
Lt Col William D. Lockwood, 26 May 1970
Lt Col Roy S. Dickey, 18 Jul-2 Nov 1970
Lt Col William H. Lewis, 2 Nov-10 Dec 1970 (Acting)
None (Not Manned), 10 Dec 1970-14 May 1971
Lt Col Charles J. O'connell, 15 May 1971
Lt Col William F. Weiger, 7 Sep 1971

Lt Col John W. Varnum, 19 Aug 1973
Lt Col Harold L. Allen, 22 May 1975
Lt Col Bobby R. Noack, 21 Nov 1975
Lt Col Arlo P. Wenstrand, 4 Feb 1978
Lt Col Robert D. Clark, 1 Jun 1979
Lt Col William R. Ricks, 15 Jun 1981
Col Joe Lee Burns, 26 Nov 1982
Lt Col Jerry L. Hanchey, 30 May 1984
Lt Col George W. Hawks Jr., 7 Nov 1985
Lt Col William E. Current, 22 May 1987
Lt Col Carrol H. Chandler, 17 Jun 1988
Lt Col John P. Pope, 30 Nov 1989
Lt Col Robert P. Manke, 3 Jul 1991
Lt Col Craig R. Dedrick, 9 Apr 1993
Lt Col James J. Jackson Jr., 10 Nov 1994
Lt Col John M. Dailey, 16 Feb 1996
Lt Col Richard M. Kessel, 1 Feb 1997
Lt Col Derek S. Hess, 28 Apr 1998
Lt Col Roderick C. Zastrow, 14 Jul 2000
Lt Col Jeffery Hanson, 4 May 2001
Lt Col Bruce D. Ellwein, 12 Jul 2003
Lt Col William K. Lewis, 6 May 2005
Lt Col Richard H. Boutwell, 4 May 2007
Lt Col Brian Farrar, Apr 2009
Lt Col Joel Carey, Nov 2010
Lt Col David Eaglin, 11 May 2012

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Guadalcanal

Northern Solomons

Bismarck Archipelago

New Guinea

Leyte

Luzon

Southern Philippines

Central Pacific

Western Pacific

China Defensive

Vietnam

Vietnam Advisory
Vietnam Defensive
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III
Vietnam Air/Ground
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV
TET 69/ Counteroffensive
Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969
Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Southwest Monsoon
Commando Hunt V

Global War on Terrorism
GWOT-E

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Award
Philippine Islands, 10–11 Nov 1944

Presidential Unit Citations
Southeast Asia, 22 Apr–23 Jun 1965 and 22–28 Oct 1965
Southeast Asia, 25 Apr–1 May 1967

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device
1 Aug 1964–5 Jun 1965
25 Apr–30 Jun 1967
1 Jul 1967–30 Jun 1968
1 Jul 1968–15 Sep 1969
15 Oct 1969–24 Nov 1970

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Dec 1959–30 Nov 1960
1 Sep 1962–31 Aug 1963
6 Jun 1965–31 Dec 1966
1 Sep 1978–30 Sep 1979
1 Oct 1979–31 May 1980
1 Jul 1981–31 May 1983
1 Jun 1983–31 May 1984
1 Jul 1984–31 May 1986
1 Jun 1987–31 May 1989

1 Jun 1989–31 May 1991
1 Jun 1991–31 May 1993
1 Jun 1993–31 Aug 1994
1 Sep 1995–31 Aug 1997
1 Oct 1998–30 Sep 2000
1 Oct 2000–30 Sep 2002
1 Oct 2002–30 Sep 2004
1 Nov 2005–30 Sep 2007
31 Oct 2009–[1 Nov] 2010
2 Nov 2010–1 Nov 2012
2 Nov 2012–1 Nov 2013

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm
7 Mar 1967–15 Mar 1971

EMBLEM



44 Pursuit Squadron emblem





A bat's head affronte, with leering expression, black, with yellow and red detail, between two wings, expanded and inverted, red, with ribs black. (Approved, 18 Feb 1942)

latest rendering, 3 Sep 2019.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Flew patrols over the Pacific from Hawaii, 7 Dec 1941–Oct 1942. Combat in the South and Southwest Pacific, 21 Dec 1942–15 Aug 1945.

The 44 Pursuit Squadron was formed in November 1940, and first activated as part of the 18 Pursuit Group at Wheeler Field, TH. When their field was attacked by Japan on 7 December 1941, the 44 had been deployed to nearby Bellows Field for gunnery practice ... enabling it to delay the immediate destruction suffered by the units at Wheeler and Hickam. In an effort to take off under heavy fire from the enemy, Lt Whiteman was shot down immediately after take-off, Lieut. Hans Christensen was killed while getting into a P-40 to take-off. Lt Samuel W. Bishop took off and was shot down into the ocean. Although wounded in the leg, this pilot swam ashore.

A rebuilt 44 squadron was deployed to Efate, New Hebrides November 1942, rejoined the 18 Fighter Group in March 1943, and continued flying their P-40s from Guadalcanal from December 1942, then switched to P-38s through March 1944. Island hopping their twin-engine Lightnings northward, they moved to Treasury Island, Cape Opmarai New Guinea, Morotai, and Jan '45 they moved to Lingayen Gulf, Philippines. Deferring to 49th Group units, they moved back South to Mindoro and Palawan from April thru May 1945, then to Zamboanga Mindanao from May '45 through the end of the war in August 1945, then to Puerto Princessa, Palawan, where they remained until Nov '45. The 44 Squadron claimed a total of 169 Japanese aircraft shot down during WWII operations, earning three Presidential Unit Citations, the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation and ten Battle Stars. After several months at Florida Blanca, Luzon (Jul '46 - Mar '47) where they became non-operational briefly (Mar - Oct 1947), the 44 was moved to Clark Field and re-equipped for a short time with P-51 Mustangs, then P-47s and back again into P-51 Mustangs. The unit converted to Lockheed F-80C in mid-1949, which they retained until 1954 when they converted to F-86F.

The 44 Squadron at Clark AFB, PI, was the sole aerial protection for the Philippines and Formosa while her sister units, the 12th and 67th Squadrons fought in Korea from mid-1950 through mid-1953, providing replacement combat crews and F-80 aircraft to replace the losses incurred in three years of combat. Several years of partial deployments followed: Yonton, Okinawa 11 Nov - 11 Dec '54; Tao Juan, Formosa 27 Jan - 17 Feb '55; and 3 Sep - 30 Sep '55; Pyongtaek, South Korea 15 - 18 Apr 1956; Korat and Takhli, Thailand 18 Dec '64 - 25 Feb '65, flying F-105s in Vietnam combat.

The 44 TFS began to make a name for itself in the air war over Southeast Asia shortly after its arrival at Korat RT AFB in December 1964 as one of the first F-105 units to deploy on temporary rotation to Thailand. The unit flew combat missions during two more deployments to Korat.

Combat in Southeast Asia, 18 Dec 1964–25 Feb 1965, 21 Apr–22 Jun 1965, 19–29 Oct 1965, and 25 Apr 1967–6 Oct 1970. Unmanned, 31 Dec 1966–24 Apr 1967 and Nov 1970–15 May 1971. Air defense of Okinawa and Japan, 1971–.

The 44 TFS remained at Kadena AB, Okinawa and assignment to the 18 TFW, but on 31 December 1966, it became only a paper organization without aircraft. The high loss rate of F-105s in the two combat wings mandated several non-combat units to turn in their jets, so that Korat and Takhli could continue to dish out punishment to the enemy. The 44 was a "paper organization" until 25 April 1967, when it returned to Korat absorbing the personnel, equipment and resources of the 421st TFS. After its reactivation at Korat the 44 proved itself to be an effective unit of the 388th Tac Fighter Wing, flying daily combat missions against communist targets in North Vietnam.

The 44 was basically a strike squadron, flying the single seat F-105D, until October 1967 when it absorbed the mission and makeup of the wing's 13th TFS, absorbing their two-seat F-105F aircraft and the unit then possessed both D and F model Thunderchiefs. The squadron's primary mission became one of flying escort to the wing's regular strike force to suppress anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). Another inherited special mission from the 13th was that of "Ryan's Raiders" night radar bombing flights in specially equipped F-105Fs.

On 10 October 1969, the Vampires moved to Takhli RTAFB, simultaneously flying a full 10 combat sorties that same day. Their Weasel birds were distributed throughout the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing and they began flying strike missions again. The 44 Vampires flew out of Takhli until 10 December 1970.

Returning to Kadena AFB in 1971, they continued various deployments to Kunsan, South Korea 2 Apr - 2 Jun 1972; Ching Chuan Kang, Taiwan 6 Nov '72 - 5 Aug 1973, and periodically thereafter through April 1975. The 44 remains operational flying F-15 Eagles in the 18 Wing, still guarding the Pacific from Kadena AFB, Okinawa.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Steven E. Clay. *US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941*. Combat Studies Institute Press. US Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Nd.