

## 6 WEAPONS SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

6 Aero Squadron organized, 13 Mar 1917  
Redesignated 6 Squadron, 14 Mar 1921  
Redesignated 6 Pursuit Squadron, 25 Jan 1923  
Redesignated 6 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor), 6 Dec 1939  
Redesignated 6 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942  
Redesignated 6 Night Fighter Squadron, 9 Jan 1943  
Inactivated, 20 Feb 1947  
Redesignated 6 Weapons Squadron

### STATIONS

Ft Kamehameha, TH, 13 Mar 1917  
Ford Island (later Luke Field), TH, 25 Sep 1918  
Wheeler Field, TH, 11 Jan 1927  
Kahuku, TH, 30 Aug 1942  
Kipapa, TH, 17 Nov 1942 (one detachment operated from Guadalcanal, 28 Feb-15 Sep 1943, and another from New Guinea, 18 Apr-14 Sep 1943)  
John Rodgers Aprt, TH, 3 Mar 1944 (detachment operated from Saipan, 21 June 1944-11 Jan 1945)  
Kipapa, TH, 28 Oct 1944  
East Field, Saipan, 11 Jan 1945 (detachment operated from Kipapa, TH, 11 Jan-12 May 1945)

Kagman Field, Saipan, Feb-1 May 1945  
Kipapa, TH, 12 May 1945  
Wheeler Field, TH, 2 Oct 1945-31 May 1946  
Atsugi, Japan, 11 Jun 1946  
Yokota, Japan, 1Sep 1946- 20 Feb 1947

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Hawaiian Department, 13 Mar 1917  
2<sup>nd</sup> Observation (later 5<sup>th</sup> Observation; 5<sup>th</sup> Pursuit and Bombardment; 5<sup>th</sup> Composite) Group, 15 Sep  
1919  
18<sup>th</sup> Pursuit (later Fighter) Group, Jan 1927  
15<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 16 Mar 1943  
VII Fighter Command, 5 Jun 1944  
7<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 12 May 1945  
Pacific Air Command, 1 Jan 1946  
Fifth Air Force, 11 Jun 1946-20 Feb 1947

### **ATTACHMENTS**

318<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, 11 Jan-16 Mar 1945

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

N-9  
R-6  
HS2L  
DH-4  
HS2L  
JN-6  
MB-3A,  
Fokker D-VII  
PW-9A  
PW-9C  
DH-4A  
DH-4M  
C-2  
P-12B  
P-12C  
P-12E  
PW-9  
B-12  
OA-3  
P-26A  
P-26B  
P-36A  
B-12

A-12  
OA-9  
P-40B, 1941-1942  
B-18, 1942  
P-70, 1942-1944  
P-38, 1943  
P-47, 1943-1945  
P-61B, 1944-1947  
RP-26A  
RP-40B

### **COMMANDERS**

1st Lt Walter Miller, Dec 1920  
1st Lt J. Thaddeus Johnson, 7 Jun 1921  
Capt Horace W. Mooney, 7 Aug 1922  
Capt Edwin J. House, 14 Nov 1922  
Unknown, 2 Dec 23-14 Jul 1924  
Capt Hugh M. Elmendorf, 15 Jul 1924  
1st Lt Russell L. Meredith, 22 Jun 1926  
Capt Clyde V. Finter, 1 Aug 1926  
1st Lt Bernard T. Castor, 8 Mar 1928  
Capt Lotha A. Smith, 2 Oct 1928  
1st Lt Bernard T. Castor, 19 Feb 1929  
Capt Frank H. Pritchard, 1 Jul 1929  
1st Lt Hoyt S. Vandenburg, 6 Nov 1929  
1st Lt Stewart W. Towle, 1 May 1931  
1st Lt Edward H. White, 1 Oct 1931  
1st Lt Ralph E. Fisher, 1 Mar 1932  
1st Lt Ray H. Clark, 12 Jan 1935  
Maj Early E. W. Duncan, 12 Mar 1935  
Maj John C. Crosthwaite, 3 Sep 1935  
1st Lt Bryant L. Boatner, 18 Aug 1936  
1st Lt Homer L. Sanders, 16 Nov 1936  
1st Lt Paul D. Bunker, Jr., 20 Nov 1937  
1st Lt Harry E. Wilson, 7 Jan 1938  
Capt Robert W. Douglass, Jr., 7 Apr 1938  
Capt Samuel E. Anderson, 20 Jul 1939  
1st Lt James R. Watt, Oct 1940  
Capt Sidney F. Wharton, 14 Sep 1942  
Capt Victor M. Mahr, 18 Feb 1943  
Capt Julius E. Alford (acting), 12 Apr 1943  
Capt Victor M. Mahr, 1 May 1943  
Capt Julius E. Alford (acting), 16 Jun 1943  
Maj Victor M. Mahr, 8 Jul 1943

Maj Julius E. Alford, 1 Apr 1944  
Maj Victor M. Mahr, 15 Apr 1944  
Maj Julius E. Alford, 15 May 1944  
Capt Mark E. Martin  
1st Lt Robert T. Merrill III, 18 Dec 1944  
Capt Mark E. Martin, 11 Jan 1945  
Capt George W. Mulholland, 7 Mar 1945-Oct 1945

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Central Pacific  
New Guinea  
Northern Solomons  
Western Pacific  
Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**



6 Night Fighter Squadron emblem: On a circular orange field, a gray skull outlined in black forming the hub of a shaded spinning propeller done in black. (Approved, 8 Jul 1924)



**6th Night Fighter Sq.  
(From 1943)**



## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Major J. F. Curry (then Captain) arrived in this department on February 13, 1917. On March 13, 1917, I arrived with 49 enlisted men from the Signal Corps Aviation School at San Diego. These men were selected as a nucleus for this organization in compliance with telegraphic instructions from the Adjutant General's Office, dated February 23, 1917. The detachment consisted of 9 Non-Commissioned Officers and 40 privates. There were nine men of over one year's service; eleven of over six months and 29 of less than six months service in the detachment. At the present time there are 74 men in the organization and the applications for transfer have been so numerous that I have been forced to limit them to Non-commissioned officers who are willing to transfer as privates.

Due to the fact that Hire Company B, 3d Field Battalion, Signal Corps is temporarily quartered with the organization it is impossible to transfer any more at present, but they are on the waiting list, 1 Battalion Sergeant Major, Field Artillery, 10 Sergeants and 11 Corporals. Lack of quarters at Fort Kamehameha will limit the organization to 100 men. The building up of the Squadron has been done under adverse conditions as we have been here nearly six months without any machines.

Major Curry was ordered back to the United States and left here July 11th, leaving me in command of the organization, to act as supply officer and department aeronautical officer; being the only aviation officer on duty in this Department. The organization has received the following instruction: Infantry drill through the School of the Company. 22 men have been qualified in the operation, care and maintenance of racard trucks. The instruction given them has been sufficient to qualify them for a professional driver's license. 29 men have been qualified in the orientation, care, and maintenance of motorcycles. To qualify riders must give a practical demonstration to handle a machine in ordinary city traffic. 8 men are at present under instruction as radio operator. Their

instructor being Sergeant First Class George Clark of Hire Company 3d Field Bn, Signal Corps. 10 men have qualified in visual signaling, sending, and receiving five combinations of five mixed letters in one minute at a distance of about 500 yards. 14 additional men are now under instruction in this class 11 non-commissioned officers are under instruction in theoretical motors using Dyke's automobile encyclopedia as a text book. This course is very thorough and embodies a weekly written test. It has been in operation about four weeks and will continue two weeks longer, when a new class will be formed. 11 men are under instruction in the care and handling of airplanes. As there are no airplanes here the course consists of lectures and practical work in making fittings, splices, etc. 1 is under instruction as a photographer, and arrangements are under way to have one or more men sent to the Pearl Harbor Naval Station for instruction in sail making. 3 non-commissioned officers have been attached to the 1st Infantry at Schofield Barracks for instruction with line troops in view of their future use as observers.

A considerable proportion of the equipment ordered for the Squadron has arrived and is continuing to come in by each boat, but as yet no seaplanes have arrived nor have I been able to get any definite information as to the exact date of their shipment. The only two known to be under order are two U-9 Navy training machines, the contract for which was let to the Curtiss Company on January 31st, and the time limit for their construction was set at 105 days. The Curtiss Company informed me that they hoped to ship them during the week of July 16, 1917, but have as yet received no word of their having left the factory although I have written the Curtiss Company for the information.

Ford Island has been selected for a permanent site for Aviation in these Islands, and 24.7 acres have been leased and cleared. The sum of \$70,800.00 has been allotted for the construction of four temporary hangars, a garage, machine shop and storehouse. As the Squadron is temporarily located at Fort Kamehameha and as it was thought at the time that the two N-9 Seaplanes would arrive at any time, a space was cleared at that post and canvas hangars made to house them as at that time Ford Island had not been procured.

The temporary storehouse and garage were also erected there. The four temporary hangars will be erected on the leased land at Ford Island but will not be ready for occupancy for at least three months as the steel contract has just been approved in Washington and its shipment. From the States will not reach here under 60 days at the earliest. As all the development work such as drafting, surveying, etc. for the entire project has been paid for out of the hangar money, this authority may have to be increased to finish the hangars, as a considerable amount of grading will have to be done at Ford Island which was evidently not considered when the allotment was made.

I recommend that the 6 Aero Squadron be ordered back to the United States where it may be of some value to the Government either as a unit for service in France or at one of the newly organized training schools. The organization has been here nearly six months without machines and it seems a wrong usage of even partly trained personnel to not make use of them along the lines for which they were enlisted and trained. Even with two seaplanes in commission here the organization would be of little military value for some time, due to the fact that I am the only aviation officer present, and after having been away from flying for six months and never having

had any experience whatsoever in seaplane work my worth as a finished military aviator is greatly impaired. In addition to the above facts it is believed that one aviator and two machines under the conditions outlined throughout this letter constitute small military value in this department. If ordered back to the organization could without detriment to other organizations be built up to full strength and with the equipment now on hand would prove a valuable asset for service abroad or at any training school.

On 26 September Col Hap Arnold said It is not the policy of this office to withdraw the 6 Aero Squadron from the Hawaiian Islands at the present time. Major Brooks, the Commanding Officer, has been ordered to return to the United States where his services are now needed. For his place there will be another flying officer, Major Clark, now under orders to proceed to Hawaii. This office is much pleased with the outline of instruction that has been given to the 6 Aero Squadron and realizes that this has been done under adverse circumstances, and with no encouragement to go ahead. It is very probable that the men who have received this instruction will be needed in the United States in the training of the new Aviation Units continually being formed. It is desired that the Commanding Officer of the 6 Aero Squadron submit to this office a list of the men in the squadron showing the different grades and qualifications of these men, and the positions that they are now suited for with the amount of service that they have had. Non-commissioned officers who are considered fit to be commissioned officers will be ordered before a Board in the Hawaiian Islands, their papers completed and sent to this office for final action.

N-9 seaplanes have been ordered sent to Fort Kamehameha and will arrive in December.

Authority was obtained this date for the purchase of the entire Ford Island by the War Department. Cable was sent to Hawaiian Department notifying them of this fact. It was impossible to obtain a Government price for the steel for the hangars, and no money had been allotted to build them, and authority give the Commanding Officer, 6 Aero Squadron to construct same, instructions were sent by wire to the Hawaiian Department to handle all details in Honolulu.

Recommendation as to the sending; of an officer who has had flying experience up to a recent date, is concurred in. Major Clark has been ordered to Fort Kamehameha for duty.

Specifications and plans for the erection of four hangars on Ford Island are now in the hands of prospective bidders. These bids will be opened on October 31st. It is believed that additional funds will be required to complete these hangars as the original allotment was made about 9 months ago and did not contemplate the expenses launching runways made necessary by the unusual and abrupt shore line of Ford Island. During the period elapsing between opening of bids and allotment of funds the cost of labor and material has increased more than JOJL Bids could not be taken at an earlier date due to the fact that a lease of Ford Island had not been procured and also the contract for the steel, as held up awaiting approval. Of Government price which was not obtained. Further details will be furnished in reference to cost of erection of hangars upon the opening of the bids.



6 Aero Squadron HS-2L in a hangar at Luke Field, Territory of Hawaii.

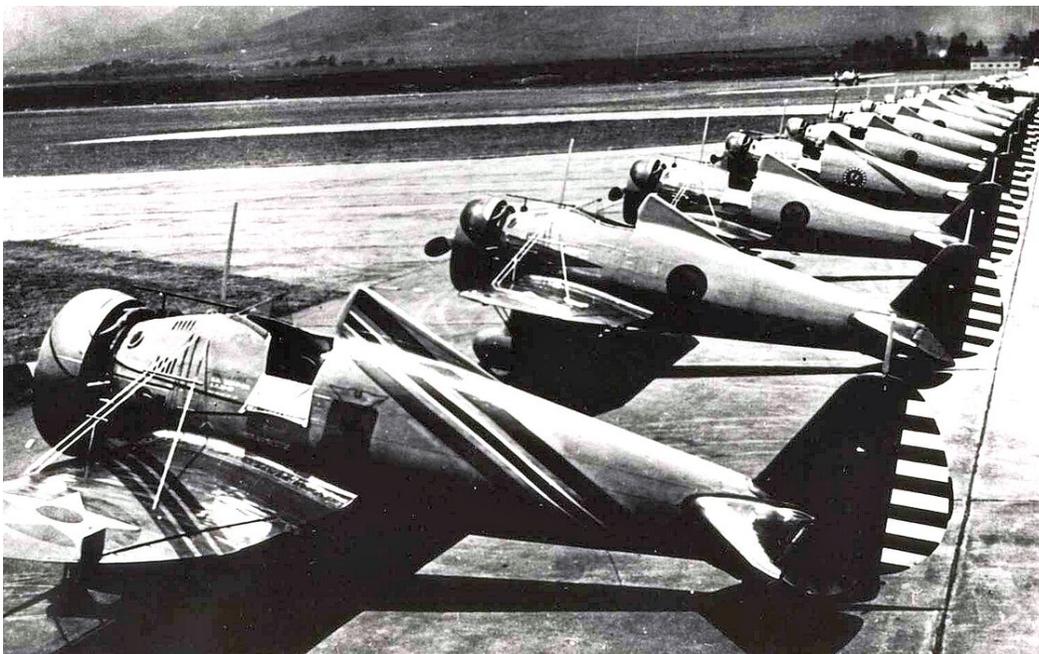


Squadron member with squadron mascot in front of DH-4, Luke Field, 1920

Combat in Central, South, and Southwest Pacific, 7 Dec 1941-14 Aug 1945.



P-12 at Wheeler Field, 1935



P-26 at Wheeler Field, 1940

On 7 Dec 1941, at approximately 0802, a large formation of enemy airplanes were heard approaching Wheeler Field from the North at approximately 5000 feet. They peeled off and

attacked the hangar line with Dive Bombers, releasing in all about thirty five bombs; of these, approximately four were 600 lbs.; about three were 250 lb.; about eight were 100 lbs.; the remainder were smaller and some appeared to be oil or other type of incendiary bombs. The airplanes appeared to release their bombs from an altitude of from 500 to 1000 feet.

Bombs struck and burned Hangar No.1 where the Base Engineering was situated and Hangar No.3. They also burned a building used as a store house by the Post Exchange and a mobilization type warehouse filled with cement. One bomb struck the 6 Pursuit Squadron barracks on the Southwest corner entering a window on the second floor where it exploded causing considerable damage to personnel and rendering the building unserviceable. One bomb which landed in the open made a crater approximately 15 feet in diameter and six feet deep.

The following casualties were incurred at Wheeler Field,  
38 Enlisted Men Killed.

59 Enlisted Men Wounded.

These casualties were suffered mostly by the men sleeping in the tents and those sleeping in the 6 Pursuit Squadron barracks that was hit by a bomb.

On 6 July, two different crews each shot down a night raiding Betty bombing and another Betty was destroyed on the night of 14 July after taking most of 134 rounds of 20 mm shells fired at it by a 6 NFS Black Widow.

Japanese attacks against Saipan, begun again as the B-29s started hitting Tokyo from Saipan, lasted into February. In December there were four attacks by Betty bombers all coming at night, one by 25 planes on Christmas night and the rest by a few planes and there were several daylight recon sorties. In the course of the last three December raids, P-61s of the 6 Night Fighter Squadron shot down six Bettys. Two of these fell on the night of 25 December to the P-61A "Moonhappy" flown by Lt. Dale Haberman with Lt. Raymond Mooney as Radar Observer.

The 6 NFS operated six Douglas P-70 night fighters from late 1943. It had six on hand through May 1944, five in June, four in July and two in August. No unit markings were carried on the P-61s, although a number of them had names and/or artwork on their noses.

First P-61 received: May 1, 1944

First enemy aircraft destroyed by P-61 crew: June 20, 1944

Squadron total enemy aircraft destroyed by P-61 crews: 16.



P-61 being serviced on East Field, Saipan, Mariana Islands, 1944



P-61 somewhere in the Pacific, 1944



6 Night Fighter Squadron P-61 on Saipan.

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USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

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

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