

55 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

55 Aero Squadron constituted, 9 Aug 1917
Redesignated 467 Aero Squadron, 1 Feb 1918
Demobilized, 16 Mar 1919
Reconstituted and redesignated 55 Pursuit Squadron, 24 Mar 1923
Activated, 15 Nov 1930
Redesignated 55 Pursuit Squadron (Fighter), 6 Dec 1939
Redesignated 55 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor), 12 Mar 1941
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine), 30 Dec 1942
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron, Twin Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 5 Sep 1944
Inactivated, 18 Oct 1945
Activated, 29 Jul 1946
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 15 Jun 1948
Redesignated 55 Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Redesignated 55 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958
Redesignated 55 Fighter Squadron, 1 Oct 1991
Inactivated, 30 Dec 1993
Activated, 1 Jan 1994

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 9 Aug 1917
Hazelhurst Field, NY, 21 Sep–13 Oct 1917
Issoudun, France, 4 Nov 1917
St Jean-de-Monts, France, 16 May 1918
Latrecey, France, 6 Nov 1918–8 Feb 1919
Garden City, NY, 4–16 Mar 1919
Mather Field, CA, 15 Nov 1930
Barksdale Field, LA, 31 Oct 1932
Moffett Field, CA, 19 Nov 1939
Hamilton Field, CA, 9 Sep 1940
Wilmington, NC, c. 22 Feb 1942
Morris Field, NC, 23 Apr 1942
Drew Field, FL, 7 Aug 1942
Paine Field, WA, 30 Sep 1942
March Field, CA, 1 Jan–11 Aug 1943
Wittering, England, 27 Aug 1943
Kings Cliffe, England, Apr 1944–11 Oct 1945
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 16–18 Oct 1945
Biggs Field, TX, 29 Jul 1946
Shaw Field (later, AFB), SC, 25 Oct 1946
Langley AFB, VA, 19 Nov 1951–22 May 1952
Wethersfield, England, 1 Jun 1952
Sculthorpe, England, 9 Aug 1955
Wethersfield, England, 27 Apr 1956
RAF Upper Heyford, England, 1 Jun 1970–30 Dec 1993
Shaw AFB, SC, 1 Jan 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Incirlik AB, Turkey, 31 Aug–23 Oct 1990

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 9 Aug–Nov 1917
Third Aviation Instruction Center, Nov 1917
Aerial Gunnery School, May 1918
2 Air Depot, Nov 1918–Feb 1919
Unkn, Feb–16 Mar 1919
2 Bombardment Wing, 15 Nov 1930
8 Pursuit Group, 1 Apr 1931
20 Pursuit (later, 20 Fighter) Group, 15 Jun 1932–18 Oct 1945
20 Fighter (later, 20 Fighter-Bomber) Group, 29 Jul 1946
20 Fighter-Bomber (later, 20 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Feb 1955
20 Operations Group, 31 Mar 1992–30 Dec 1993
20 Operations Group, 1 Jan 1994

ATTACHMENTS

20 Pursuit Group

20 Pursuit Group

20 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 15 Nov 1952–7 Feb 1955

39 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Aug–23 Oct 1990

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-12, 1930–1935

DH-4 1931

P-26, 1934–1938

P-36, 1938–1940

P-40, 1940–1942

P-39, 1942–1943

P-38, 1943–1944

P-51, 1944–1945

P-51, 1946–1948

F-84, 1948–1957

F-100, 1957–1971

F-111, 1971

A-10

OA-10

F-16

COMMANDERS

Capt Gustave G. Baetcke, 25 Aug 1917-16 Mar 1919

1st Lt Clarence E. Crumrine, 15 Nov 1930

Capt Harold L. Cloke, 1 Feb 1933

1st Lt Clarence E. Crumrine, 24 Jun 1933

1st Lt Hilbert M. Wittkop, 7 Jul 1934

1st Lt Earl W. Barnes, 23 Jul 1934

Capt Armin F. Herold, 29 Mar 1935

Capt Morris R. Nelson 7 Oct 1936

Capt Homer L. Sanders 1 Jun 1939

1st Lt Avelin P. Tacon Jr.,

Maj Paul Lobingier, Oct 1942

Maj David R. McGovern, 1943

Maj Frank C. Clark, 29 Dec 1943

Maj Donald H. Mcauley, 8 Mar 1944

Lt Col Cy Wilson, 29 Apr 1944

Lt Col Martin L. Low, 25 Jun 1944

Maj Richard P. Gatterdam, 6 Dec 1944

Maj Jack C. Price, 23 Mar 1945

Maj Maurice C. Cristadoro Jr., 4 Apr 1945-Unkn

Lt Col Franklin A. Nichols, 29 Jul 1946

Maj John M. Winkler, Sep 1946
Lt Col Alfred J. Ball, 30 Oct 1946
Lt Col Richard Cline, 8 Jan 1947
Lt Col Francis S. Gabreski, Apr 1947
Maj James C. Hare, 4 Aug 1947
Lt Col Melvin J. Neilson, Sep 1947
Maj Harold A. Lind (Temporary), 5 May 1948
Lt Col Elmer E. Mctaggart, 21 Jun 1948
Maj Harold A. Lind, (Temporary), Jul 1948
Maj Charles W. Lasko (Temporary), Aug 1948
Lt Col Elmer E. Mctaggart, Sep 1948
Maj Charles W. Lasko, Oct 1948
Col Gilbert O. Waymond Jr., Apr 1949
Maj Charles W. Lasko, May 1949
Lt Col William L. Mitchell Jr., 1950
Lt Col Joseph A. Hagemann, 24 Jul 1951
Maj John S. Bradley, 6 Aug 1954
Maj John J. Kropenick, 10 Mar 1955
Maj Max T. Beall, C. 1 May 1956
Col Michael C. Mccarthy, 15 Jun 1956
Lt Col Charles L. Miller, 15 Mar 1957
Lt Col Raymond L. Flint, 2 Nov 1957
Lt Col Raymond R. Stewart, 1 Jan 1959
Maj Tony M. Greget, 22 Jun 1961
Maj Walter P. Paluch Jr., 30 Jun 1963
Col Ivan H. Dethman, 22 Jul 1964
Lt Col Robert L. Jones, 8 Jul 1966
Lt Col Richard B. Davis, 10 May 1967
Maj Lawrence W. Whitford, 13 Jun 1968
Maj Donald G. Duff, 12 Sep 1968
Lt Col George G. Yeager, 1 Nov 1968
Lt Col Elwood L. Sanders, 30 Dec 1969
Lt Col Kenneth T. Blank, Jan 1971
Lt Col Harris J. Taylor, 27 Aug 1971
Lt Col Charles A. Herning (Acting), 17 Sep 1972
Lt Col George W. Kronsbein Jr., 29 Nov 1972
Lt Col James S. Walbridge, Jul 1973
Lt Col William K. James, 1 Dec 1975
Lt Col William E. Pickens III, 29 Jun 1977
Lt Col Albert S. Dodd lii, 12 Jun 1979
Lt Col John H. Wambough Jr., 26 May 1981
Lt Col Donald D. Henry, Oct 1981
Lt Col Danny D. Howard, 24 Feb 1983
Lt Col Gary A. Voellger, 22 Feb 1985

Lt Col James W. Savage Jr., 15 Nov 1986
Lt Col Robert D. Balph li, 30 Sep 1988
Lt Col John W. Dorough Jr., 25 Sep 1989
Lt Col Terry L. Simpson, 2 Nov 1990
Lt Col Daniel C. Clark, 11 Sep 1992
Lt Col Kenneth D. Holder, 15 Jul 1993
None, Not Manned, 15 Oct-30 Dec 1993
Lt Col John A. Neubauer, 1 Jan 1994
Lt Col Timothy B. Vigil, 4 Aug 1995
None, Not Manned, 3 Jul 1996-6 Jul 1997
Lt Col Maurice H. Forsyth, 7 Jul 1997
Lt Col Robert D. Harvey, 10 Jul 1998
Lt Col James N. Post iii, 19 May 2000
Lt Col John K Forsythe Jr., 28 Jun 2002
Lt Col John P. Montgomery, 27 Jun 2003
Lt Col David C. Hathaway, 3 Jun 2005
Lt Col Miles A. Demayo, 22 Jun 2007
Lt Col Douglas D. Demaio, 2 Mar 2009
Lt Col Michael K. Schnabel, 10 Dec 2010
Lt Col Christopher A. Claus, 15 Jun 2012
Lt Col Michael G. Horlbeck, 10 Jan 2014

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War I Theater of Operations

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Central Germany, 8 Apr 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1956–30 Sep 1957

1 May 1963–31 Dec 1964

1 Jan 1965–31 Mar 1966

1 Jul 1968–31 Mar 1970

1 Sep 1970–30 Jun 1972

31 Mar 1973–30 Jun 1974

1 Jul 1977–30 Jun 1979

1 Jul 1981–30 Jun 1983

1 Jul 1987–30 Jun 1989

1 Jul 1990–30 Jun 1992

1 Oct 1992–15 Oct 1993

1 Jan–31 Dec 1994

1 Jul 1997–31 May 1999

1 Jun 1999–31 May 2001

EMBLEM

55th PS

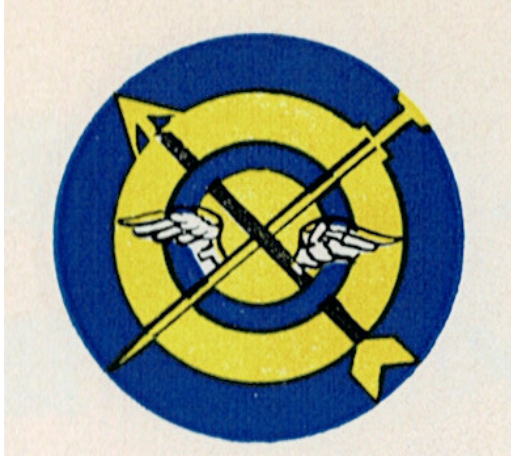


~1930 - 1932

55th PS & FS



1932 - 1991



55 Pursuit Squadron

55 Pursuit Squadron emblem: On a yellow disk bordered in blue, placed insaltire and interlaced with a blue annulet a winged arrow point up and a winged sword point down, both black with that portion on the border yellow. The yellow disk and blue border represent the sun and sky, and the winged arrow the fast rate of climb of a plane starting into the sky, passing through the sun's rays and again into the sky. The winged sword symbolizes power and destruction, and with the point placed downward, denotes the pursuit plane's method of launching an attack. The annulet interlaced with the sword and arrow produces a fret, which signifies unity. The colors are those of the Air Corps.(Approved, 4 May 1932)





55 Fighter Squadron emblem: Azure, a pair of die in perspective Argent shaded Silver Gray, each showing "five" in the obverse, Sable, the shaded sides of the die showing "six" to base and "four" to chief of the last, each within a five of the numeral "55," its' top bars as stylized wings Argent, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "55 FIGHTER SQ" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "FIGHTING FIFTY FIFTH " in Yellow letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The winged designation represents rapid flight while carrying dice, signifying the risks involved in aerial combat. (Adopted 1952 and approved in Jul 1991)

MOTTO

FIGHTING FIFTY FIFTH

OPERATIONS

Constructed and maintained facilities (after 6 Nov 1918 in Zone of Advance), Nov 1917–Dec 1918.

Demobilized on 16 March 1919 at Garden City, NY, as the 467th Aero Squadron. Reconstituted in the Regular Army on 24 March 1923 as the 55 Pursuit Squadron and assigned to the 16th Pursuit Group. Designated Active Associate was the 50th Observation Squadron 1923-27. Allotted to the Third Corps Area on 28 February 1927. Withdrawn from the Third Corps Area on 1 September 1928 and allotted to the Eighth Corps Area. Concurrently, relieved from assignment to the 16th Pursuit Group and assigned to the 8th Pursuit Group. Kelly Field, TX, designated as headquarters location on organization, but the unit was never organized at that location. Activated on 15 November 1930 at Mather Field, CA. Relieved from assignment to the 8th Pursuit Group on 15 June 1932 and assigned to the 20th Pursuit Group. Transferred on 31 October 1932 to Barksdale Field, LA. Transferred on 19 November 1939 to Moffett Field, CA. Redesignated as the 55 Pursuit Squadron (Fighter) on 6 December 1939. Awarded the Frank Luke Trophy for 1940. Transferred on 9 September 1940 to Hamilton Field, CA. Redesignated as the 55 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) on 12 March 1941.

At the beginning of World War II, the 55 sent its people to units fighting overseas and continued to train aviators for squadrons in Europe and the Pacific. In May 1942, it was redesignated a fighter squadron and transitioned to the P-39, operating from several locations in the United States before acquiring P-38.

The 55 was in the skies over Europe by August 1943, operating from Royal Air Force Wittering, England. The squadron flew 175 combat missions with the Lightning before acquiring the P-51 (F-6) Mustang in 1944. With the rest of the 20th Fighter Group, the 55 flew daily strafing, long-range-patrol and bomber-escort missions. In June, they provided air cover during the massive allied invasion at Normandy.

As the war progressed, the 55 performed escort and fighter-bomber missions supporting the Allied advance through Central Europe and the Rhineland. In December 1945, they took part in the Battle of the Bulge, escorting bombers to the battle area. The squadron's 175th and last combat mission in the P-51 was flown in April 1945, the day after American and Soviet forces met at the Elbe River. The 55 was demobilized Oct. 18, 1945, after the war's end, but was reactivated July 29, 1946, at Biggs Field, Texas, flying air power demonstrations and training operations in the P-51.

The 55 entered the jet age in February 1948, with the F-84G. In January 1950, it was redesignated the 55 Fighter-Bomber Squadron. The squadron returned to England at RAF Wethersfield in June 1952.

The squadron transitioned to the F-100 in 1957 and in 1958 was redesignated the 55 Tactical Fighter Squadron.

The 55 moved with the 20th Tactical Fighter Wing to RAF Upper Heyford in June 1970. The next April, the 55 received its first F-111E, becoming fully operational in November. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the 55 participated in countless North Atlantic Treaty Organization and U.S. exercises and operations, which directly contributed to containment of Soviet threats to

Europe.

In January 1991, elements of the 55 deployed to Turkey during Operation Desert Storm. They flew more than 144 sorties, amassing 415 combat hours without a loss. In May 1992, the 55 Fighter Squadron deployed to Aviano, Italy for Dragon Hammer '92.

The 55 Fighter Squadron deployed 6 aircraft to Incirlik AB, Turkey, for Dynamic Guard '93, from 20 September - 8 October 1993. This was the last operational deployment for the 20th Fighter Wing while at RAF Upper Heyford.

The last of the wing's three aircraft departed Upper Heyford on 7 December 1993. The flagship of the 55 Fighter Squadron, aircraft 68055 Heartbreaker, departed first. It went to Robins AFB, Georgia, where it is now on display. The next aircraft, 68-061 The Last Roll of Me Dice, departed for the Davis Monthan AFB 'boneyard'. Finally, aircraft 68-020 The Chief, flew to Hill AFB, Utah, where it is now on display at the Hill AFB Aerospace Museum.

In the summer of 2000, the 55 deployed to Southwest Asia for Operation Northern Watch. It followed that deployment with Operation Southern Watch in the fall of 2001, and in the winter of 2002, deployed again in support of ONW.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 19 Feb 2025

Updated:

Sources

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

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.

Unit yearbook. *10th Pursuit Wing and 45th Air Base. USAAC Hamilton Field, CA. 1941*