

66 WEAPONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

66 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 66 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin Engine), 31 Jan 1942
Redesignated 66 Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942
Redesignated 66 Fighter Squadron, 1 Jun 1942)
Redesignated 66 Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 21 Aug 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Activated, 15 Aug 1946
Redesignated 66 Fighter Squadron, Jet, 20 Jul 1948
Redesignated 66 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Inactivated, 8 Jan 1958
Redesignated 66 Fighter Weapons Squadron, 22 Aug 1969
Activated, 15 Oct 1969
Inactivated, 30 Dec 1981
Redesignated 66 Weapons Squadron, 24 Jan 2003
Activated, 3 Feb 2003

STATIONS

Mitchell Field, NY, 15 Jan 1941
Hartford, CT, 18 Aug 1941
Farmingdale, NY, 14 Dec 1941
Quonset Point, RI, 27 Feb 1942

Hillsgrove, RI, 8 Jun-5 Jul 1942
Beit Daras, Palestine, 19 Aug 1942
Egypt, 16 Sep 1942
Gambut, Libya, 13 Nov 1942
El Gazala, Libya, 15 Nov 1942
Belandah, Libya, 11 Dec 1942
Hamariet, Libya, 12 Jan 1943
Darragh, Libya, 18 Jan 1943
Zuara, Libya, 24 Feb 1943
Nefatia, Tunisia, 5 Mar 1943
Ben Gardane, Tunisia, 7 Mar 1943
Soltane, Tunisia, 20 Mar 1943
Medenine, Tunisia, 4 Apr 1943
Cekira, Tunisia, 11 Apr 1943
El Djem, Tunisia, 14 Apr 1943
El Hani, Tunisia, 21 Apr 1943
Bow Grara, Tunisia, 20 May 1943
Malta, 27 Jun 1943
Pachino, Sicily, 19 Jul 1943
Scordia, Sicily 30 Jul 1943
Gioia del Colles, Italy, 25 Sep 1943
Foggia, Italy, c. 1 Oct 1943
Amendola, Italy, 27 Oct 1943
Cercola, Italy, 1 Mar 1944
Alto, Corsica, 28 Mar 1944
Ombrone, Italy, 11 Sep 1944
Grosseto, Italy, 25 Sep 1944
Villafranca di Verona, Italy, 29 Apr 1945
Grosseto, Italy, 8 May 1945
Bagnoli, Italy, 15 Jul-5 Aug 1945
Drew Field, FL, 23 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Shemya, AK, 15 Aug 1946
Elmendorf Field (later, AFB), AK, c. 30 May 1947-1 Dec 1957
Oxnard AFB, CA, 1 Dec 1957-8 Jan 1958
Nellis AFB, NV, 15 Oct 1969-30 Dec 1981
Nellis AFB, NV, 3 Feb 2003

ASSIGNMENTS

57 Pursuit (later, 57 Fighter) Group, 15 Jan 1951-7 Nov 1945
57 Fighter (later, 57 Fighter-Interceptor) Group, 15 Aug 1946
10 Air Division, 13 Apr 1953
414 Fighter Group, 1 Dec 1957-8 Jan 1958
57 Fighter Weapons (later, 57 Tactical Training; 57 Fighter Weapons) Wing, 15 Oct 1969-30 Dec 1981

USAF Weapons School, 3 Feb 2003

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-40, 1941-1944

P-47, 1944-1945

P-38, 1946

P-51, 1946-1948

F-80, 1948-1951

F-94, 1951-1953

F-89, 1953-1957

F-105, 1969-1975

T-39, 1969-1972

F-4, 1971-1975

A-10, 1977-1981

COMMANDERS

Lt G. C. Russell, 15 Jan 1941

Capt Peter McGoldrick, 19 Aug 1941

Lt Col Lydon King, 20 Nov 1941

Capt Richard E. Fairlamb, 28 Jun 1942

Maj James G. Curl, 1 Aug 1943

Maj Glenn A. Reich, 18 Aug 1943

Maj William P. Benedict, 12 Dec 1943

Capt Cortland Mccoy Jr., 5 Jun 1944

Lt Col Charles C. Leaf, 19 Jul 1944-7 Nov 1945

Capt William L. Jacobsen, 15 Aug 1946

Maj Albert S. Kelly, 28 Aug 1946

Maj Julius D. Shivers, 17 Jan 1947

Capt Jack A. Blacker, 7 May 1947

Maj James A. Wilson, 3 Jun 1947

Maj Albert S. Kelly, 14 May 1948

Maj Taras T. Popovich, 1 Jul 1948-Unkn

Maj Richard C. Catledge, Unkn-21 Dec 1951

Maj Lester F. Kress, 21 Dec 1951

Lt Col J. D. Collinsworth, 1953

Col John C. Haygood, Oct 1953

Lt Col Robert M. Fry, Jun 1954

Lt Col Richard L. Midkiff, Dec 1955

Unkn, Dec 1956-8 Jan 1958

Lt Col Ronald E. Johnson, 15 Oct 1969

Lt Col William Robert Looney, 28 Oct 1969

Lt Col Richard D. Westcott, Apr 1971

Lt Col D. G. Nelson, By 1 Jul 1972

Lt Col Raymond C. Ramsey, 15 Oct 1973

Lt Col Kenneth W. Lyon, Jul 1974
Lt Col Rodney D. Gunn, 1 Jul 1977
Lt Col Donnie M. Tribble, 1977
Lt Col Joel T. Hall, Jan 1978
Lt Col Michael L. Ferguson, 10 Apr 1980
None (Not Manned), 12 May-30 Dec 1981

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Egypt-Libya
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Southern France
North Apennines
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
North Africa and Sicily, 24 Oct 1942-17 Aug 1943
Tunis and Cape Bon Area, 18 Apr 1943
Italy, 19 Apr 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
25 Oct 1969-25 Sep 1971

French Croix de Guerre, with Palm
Oct 1942-May 1945

EMBLEM



66 Fighter Squadron



66 Fighter Squadron emblem: a brown bird having the body and head of a penguin, the yellow claws and beak of a falcon; holding a lighted cigar, wearing the clothes of a pug. The garb is listed as a red cap with visor pulled down and worn backwards, a yellow turtle-necked jersey with sleeves rolled up; and boxing gloves. (Approved, 2 Jan 1942)



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

When the Fighter Weapons School reorganized in 1981, the 66 FWS was redesignated as the A-10 Division. It has transitioned back to its heritage as the 66 Weapons Squadron.

The 66 Weapons Squadron traces its lineage back to the 66 Fighter Squadron, which was activated on 14 November 1940. During World War II, the 66 flew missions in North Africa and Italy flying P-40 and P-47 aircraft. After the war, the unit transferred to Alaska under the Alaskan Air Command, flying P-51, F-80, F-84 and F-89 aircraft until the unit was inactivated in 1957.

During the Vietnam War, the 66 was reactivated under the 57th Fighter Weapons Wing at Nellis AFB, and trained F-105 and F-4C WILD WEASEL Weapons Officers until it was inactivated in 1975.

The 66 Weapons Squadron has graduated 308 A-10 Weapons Officers since 1977.

Air defense in Alaska, Aug 1946-Dec 1957 and US west coast area, Dec 1957-Jan 1958.

Unit inactivated at Oxnard before receiving aircraft.

66 Fighter Weapons Squadron was reconstituted at Nellis AFB. The 66's mission was to develop the A-10 Fighter Weapons Instructor Course, train A-10 pilots in advanced fighter tactics and weapons delivery, and develop and validate new tactics for the A-10. The 66 had formerly flown the F-105G Wild Weasel.

As in the case of the 65th FIS, the 66 FIS's designation was transferred to the Air Defense Command on December 1, 1957, "Without Personnel and Equipment." The 66 FIS was inactivated at Oxnard AFB, California, on January 8, 1958.

Arriving in October, 1977, the first 57th A-10s were assigned to the 66 Fighter Weapons Squadron. The 66 FWS trained the initial cadre of weapons instructors from all A-10 units. The 66 FWS inactivated at the end of 1981, and the mission moved to the A-10 Division of the USAF Fighter Weapons School. As a result of the addition of B-52 and B-1B bombers to ACC, and the setup of a bomber weapons program, the "Fighter" was deleted from FWS becoming the USAF Weapons School in June 1993.

Immediately after an Air Force unit redesignation program saw the 343rd Fighter Group on Shemya designated as the 57th Fighter Group, on 15 August 1946. The new 57th FG began receiving P-51Hs from the Air Material Command depot at Spokane Field, Washington, where they had been winterized. The first two examples went to the 57th FG's 64th Fighter Squadron, and the second pair to the 65th FS. It was an inauspicious beginning, for 44-64511 was written off during an emergency landing on August 23rd because of a rough running engine and its pilot collapsing its landing gear. It was not until October before eight more P-51 Hs arrived and the last of the Group's old P-38s were disposed of.

Due to Air Force reductions of personnel, the Group's three squadrons were combined with the 64th FS, absorbing what remained of the 66 FS and the 65th FS, becoming tasked as the Group's-Reserve Training Unit. Their official role was that of "fighter defense of the Aleutian Chain, fighter support, assisting the Army in ground defense". One Mustang was lost in December, at Adak, which was the nearest suitable alternate to Shemy three hundred-fifty miles away!

It was determined that Shemya was operationally unfeasible for Mustang operations, particularly in respect to constant adverse weather conditions and logistical difficulties. In April 1947, the 57th FG withdrew to Fort Richardson, Anchor-33, Alaska. The 66 FS completed ,,,^ move on May 17th. The 65th moved up to 26 Mile Field, a satellite of Ladd Field, Fairbanks (later Eielson AFB), for practice bombing of ice dams brought on by the spring breakups. In August the 64th FS was reactivated and moved to Marks Field, Nome, with eighteen P-51Hs that had been in storage at Fort Richardson. They were just 150 miles from mainland Russia.

On August 8th the 57th FG flew its first large-scale exercise with eight P-51Hs of the 65th FS and sixteen from the 66 FS to intercept B-29s of the 7th Bombardment Group, TOY from Fort Worth, Texas, to Fairbanks, Alaska. Then, on August 15th, they worked with the Navy's Task Force 17, a submarine fleet operating off the Semide Islands.

On 14 March 1948, the 57th FG was ordered to become 100% combat ready as a result of Stalin's Berlin Blockade. As the 64th FS's location at Marks Field was considered to be untenable, they were withdrawn to Ladd Field. The winter paint schemes on the Mustangs were removed, and the aircraft's tail wheels, which had been locked down for over a year, were again made retractable and all aircraft were armed.

In April, the 57th FG obtained a squadron's worth of P-80As from the 94th FS and jet training commenced while the Group maintained a "business as usual" facade for the civilian populace. They remained on full alert, through June 10 when the 64th and 66 FSs partially stood down for P-80 training. On September 6th, the Berlin Blockade situation was determined to be calm enough to have the Group come off alert status. The 64th and 66 FSs began receiving P-80Cs and the Mustangs were prepared for transfer to the Air National Guard. The Mustangs went to the 113th FS at Stout Field, Indiana, the 181st FS at Dallas, Texas, and the 162nd FS at Dayton, Ohio. Three were lost en route to the ANG, with one fatality. The 57th FG had lost twenty-eight P-51Hs (five in midair collisions) in the two years they flew the aircraft in near combat conditions in a hostile weather environment.

Though the A-10's future is still in limbo, pilots at the Air Force Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nev., are pushing the envelope on ways to perform close air support in challenged and unchallenged environments, Lt. Col. Scott Mills, commander of the 66 Weapons Squadron, told Air Force Magazine. Mills, a veteran A-10 pilot, said regardless of the platform, it is vital for pilots to get in the mindset of the ground commander and understand how critical time is from the moment a pilot learns troops are in contact to when the pilot can act on threats.

Integration, connectivity, and better situational awareness also is critical to better CAS, he noted. As they work to improve CAS, fliers in the 66 WPS will take every chance they get to collaborate with MQ-9 Reapers flying with the 26th WPS, which runs remotely piloted aircraft tactics, said Mills. Even though Reapers don't get to fly as much CAS training as other mission areas, due to the demands of course priorities, they are "incredibly capable" when working with other assets, he said. 2014

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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