

21st FIGHTER SQUADRON



LINEAGE

21st Fighter Squadron, Single Engine constituted, 5 Oct 1944
Activated, 15 Oct 1944
Inactivated, 15 Oct 1946
Redesignated 21st Fighter Day Squadron, 26 Aug 1954
Activated, 11 Nov 1954
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1958
Inactivated, 15 Mar 1959
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 27 Oct 1972
Activated, 1 Dec 1972
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Squadron, 9 Oct 1980
Redesignated 21st Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 1 Jul 1983
Inactivated, 28 Jun 1991
Redesignated 21st Fighter Squadron and activated, 1 Nov 1991
Inactivated, 31 Dec 1993
Activated, 8 Aug 1996

STATIONS

Seymour-Johnson Field, NC, 15 Oct 1944
Bluethenthal Field, NC, 9 Nov 1944-7 Apr 1945
Ie Shima, 19 May 1945
Kadena, Okinawa, 21 Nov 1945
Yontan, Okinawa, 29 Jan-15 Oct 1946
George AFB, CA, 11 Nov 1954-10 Mar 1959
Moron AB, Spain, 11-15 Mar 1959
George AFB, CA, 1 Dec 1972-28 Jun 1991
Shaw AFB, SC, 1 Nov 1991-31 Dec 1993
Luke AFB, AZ, 8 Aug 1996

ASSIGNMENTS

413th Fighter Group, 15 Oct 1944-15 Oct 1946

413th Fighter-Day Group, 11 Nov 1954

413th Fighter-Day (later, 413th Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Oct 1957-15 Mar 1959

35th Tactical Fighter (later, 35th Tactical Training; 35th Tactical Fighter) Wing, 1 Dec 1972-28 Jun 1991

507th Air Control Wing, 1 Nov 1991

363rd Operations Group, 1 May 1992-31 Dec 1993

56th Operations Group, 8 Aug 1996

ATTACHMENTS

Sixteenth Air Force, 14-15 Mar 1959

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-47, 1944-1946

F-86, 1954-1956

F-100, 1956-1959

F-4, 1972-1981

F-16, 1981-1991

OA-10, 1991-1993

F-16, 1996

F-100C, 1959

F-4C, 1972

F-4E, 1975

F-16A, 1981

F-16B, 1981

OA-10A, 1992

F-16A, 1996

F-16B, 1996

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

F-86

53-1289

F-100C

54-2096

54-2032(C)

54-2096(C)

56-3013

56-3016

56-2961

F-4E

66-0342

67333

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

F4E: GA

F-16: LF

UNIT COLORS

21st FDS (yellow blue), @1954

21 FDS; F-100C: BLUE BAND with the squadron insignia applied to the center of the fin band.

The tail cap markings were made up of a black cap with a single red lightning bolt.

F-16A white tailband with red trim and lettering stating 'Gamblers' with a black spade on the aft end of the tailband and a red heart on the front. 1996

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 15 Oct 1944-11 Oct 1945

LTC William B. Whisonant, 12 Oct 1945

Cpt Francis J. Vetort, 13 Oct 1945

1Lt Robert W. Faas, 1 Apr 1946-unkn

Cpt Samuel H. Henton, unkn-26 Sep 1946

Cpt Louis A. Guin, 26 Sep 1946-unkn

Maj Stephen L. Bettinger, 11 Nov 1954-unkn

Col Roger L. Sprague, 1 Dec 1972

LTC William E. Whitten, 1 Mar 1973

LTC D. L. Wagner, 17 Apr 1975

LTC Paul Marsh, 2 May 1977

LTC Wallace L. Mekkers, 5 Jul 1979

Unkn, c. 1980-11 Nov 1987

LTC Dick E. Willis, 12 Nov 1987

LTC Mark D. Gilson, 26 Jul 1989

LTC David M. McLaughlin, 9 Nov 1990-28 Jun 1991

LTC Bobby G. Smith, 1 Nov 1991

LTC John A. Neubauer, 1 Oct-31 Dec 1993

LTC James R. Mitchell, 8 Aug 1996

LTC Dean A. Profitt III, 2 Apr 1998

LTC Walter E. Grace III, 18 Jun 1999

LTC Mark J. Warner, 19 Dec 2000

LTC Walter G. Farrar III, 18 Jul 2002

LTC Christopher Roeder, 4 Dec 2003

LTC Thomas G. Abbot, 8 Jun 2005

LTC Dennis J. Malfer, 28 Apr 2006

LTC James G. Sturgeon, 20 Sep 2007

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific
Ryukyus
China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

2 Feb 1976-31 Mar 1977

1 Jun 1985-31 May 1987

1 Mar 1990-28 Jun 1991

1 Jan 1992-31 Dec 1993

8 Aug 1996-30 Jun 1998

1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 2000

1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2003

1 Jun 2003-30 Jun 2005

1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2006

1 Jul 2006-30 Jun 2007

1 Jul 2007-30 Jun 2008

EMBLEM

On a yellow disc, within a border equally divided red and white, a jagged, red lightning flash passing from chief to dexter fess, behind large, black head of panther, affronte, trimmed red and white, issuing from a grayed medium blue cloud formation in base, extending up and around sinister edge with small, grayed medium blue lightning flash issuing at sinister fess point. (Approved, 5 Jan 1946)

Emblem (current): Approved, 18 March 2008

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Panthers
Gamblers

OPERATIONS

Combat in western Pacific Ocean, 20 May-14 Aug 1945. Trained for "wild weasel" radar detection and suppression missions, 1972-1981. Trained for forward air control missions, Nov 1991-1993. Since Aug 1996, trained F-16 crews.

Congress approved the PEACE FENGHUANG Program in 1992 under the signature of former President George Bush. PEACE FENGHUANG is Chinese for "Phoenix," the mystical Egyptian bird that arose from ashes and is based on the fact that a similar program had been proposed but subsequently cancelled by President Jimmy Carter. The current program is in excess of \$5.9 billion and is the second largest foreign military sales program in the history of the U.S. Air Force. Training foreign pilots is not new to Luke Air Force Base. The first foreign students to train in the "Valley of the Sun" were Chinese pilots during World War II. In February 1942, the first Chinese pilots were trained in the P-40 Warhawk, P-47 Thunderbolt and eventually the P-51 Mustang. These pilots had a major impact in the defense of China. Many of these pilots became members of a Taiwan squadron designated 21st Fighter Squadron "Blackjacks." The Blackjacks were one of the most successful squadrons during the war and were unmatched in their aerial victories against Japanese forces. Concurrently, the U.S. 21st Fighter Squadron was in the China theater attacking Japanese forces with the P-40 Warhawk and P-51 Mustang. It is in recognition of the exploits of both of these squadrons that the 21st Fighter Squadron "Gamblers" was activated at Luke. The 21st Fighter Squadron began training Taiwan pilots in February 1997, 55 years to the month that the first Chinese pilots began training here at Luke.

The early F-16 history of the 21st started in 1981 with the introduction of the new F-16s. The squadron was tasked with training pilots for PACAF and continued to do so until 1991, when it was tasked with the FAC role until disbandment in 1993.

Towards the end of 1996 a new squadron was being formed at Luke AFB. Empty hangers were refurbished and crew were pulled in from other units on base. The 21st FS draws perfect history at Luke AFB as in 1942 Chinese pilots trained in Arizona with many going back to China under the 21st FS 'Blackjacks'. Training was carried out in the P-40, P-47 and P-51 and the Chinese 21st FS became famous as one of the most successful squadrons during the war, unmatched in their aerial victories against the Japanese. By January of 1997 several F-16A/B block 20s had been delivered and the first training flights ensued, 55 years after training began for World War Two.

All the Taiwanese aircraft came from one large order of 150 F-16A/B block 20s. The program became known as Peace Fenghuang which is Chinese for 'Phoenix.' At first, twenty of these aircraft were made available, but the numbers have fluctuated over the years, mostly less aircraft for training.

Although flying what could be considered an older version of the F-16 it is more advanced than most other F-16s being flown from Luke AFB. As the first block 20 was only rolled off the production line at Fort Worth, Texas in July of 1996 these aircraft had not been tested like other blocks before going to an active training unit. Two aircraft were sent to Edwards for testing while training continued at Luke AFB. Because of this in the early years the unit liaised with

Lockheed frequently.

RoCAF F-16A block 20 #93-0721 - local serial #6620 - from the 21st FS is coming in for landing at Luke AFB in August of 2006. Training in the 21st Fighter Squadron is a combination of classroom time and flying. For students the flying involves amassing fifty flights starting with basic maneuvers to more advanced combat in both aerial engagements and bombing tactics. A program to train instructor pilots is also in place. The first class of pilots graduated in July of 1997 and the first instructor pilots graduated in June of 1998.

81-0964, the 21st FS flagship in European I, was photographed in April 1993. As evidenced by the Iraqi flag below the cockpit, this aircraft was credited with a Mi-8 helicopter air to air gun kill on 15 February 1991. Capt. Todd Sheehy was credited with the kill, the A-10s second kill.

The 21st FS, transferring from the 507th ACW, became the wings only OA-10 squadron on April 1, 1992.

The Unit trained for long range operations with P-47s before moving to the Pacific Theater during April to June of 1945. The P-47s were used for strafing missions, dive bombing and attacks on airfields, factories and radar stations, among other targets. It was assigned to the Tactical Air Command and initially equipped with the F-86H Sabre at George AFB, California. The 413th was made up of its three original Second World War squadrons: 1st (Red). 21st (Blue) and 34th (Green).

The F-86H was replaced in 1957 by the F-100C and, within a short time, squadron markings were applied to the Super Sabres. The unit markings consisted of a band around the aircraft nose and one across the top part of the fin in the appropriate squadron color. At first the squadron insignia was placed on the sides of the fuselage just beneath the cockpit but it was eventually moved to the tail band. The 413th was now equipped with the F-100D Super Sabre and a fourth squadron was assigned to the group, the 474th (Yellow).

The style of markings changed with the F-100Ds carrying two parallel bands across the fin with the 413th insignia superimposed on the lower and broader band. The group insignia had a Yellow sword added to the three already in existence. The squadron insignia was now repositioned to the sides of the fuselage below the cockpit and a single nose band was painted around the intake. Flight commanders had two bands, three bands identified a squadron commander and four were carried on the group commander's aircraft (in the colors of the four squadrons). In 1958. the 413th was redesignated as the 413th Tactical Fighter Wing. It remained at George AFB operating the F-100D until the wing was deactivated on the 15 March 1959.

First of these to go into action was the 413th Fighter Group. It was distinctive in using a two letter code to identify its P-47N's, the first letter, A, B or C, identifying the squadron to which the aircraft was assigned and the second letter being that of the aircraft within the squadron. Initially, the 1st FS marked its planes merely by painting the rudders black but leaving the outline of a diamond in NMF, and painting the forward cowl and wing tips black also. Sometime later, the 1st FS painted the tails of its planes blue with a yellow or black diamond on the vertical tail. The 21st FS also painted the tails of its P-47N's blue, with a black heart on the rudder or a yellow heart on the vertical fin, and painted the forward cowl yellow. The 34th FS painted the tails of its P-47N's yellow, with a black spade on the vertical fin, and painted the forward cowl yellow also. The tail colors of all three squadrons and the yellow forward cowls of the 21st and 34th Squadrons all had a black edging stripe.

On 8 August 1996, the Air Force activated the 21st Fighter Squadron as a combined unit with the Taiwan Air Force at Luke AFB. The Americans provided F-16 flight training and maintenance for the Taiwanese.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|----------|------|-------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | | | |
| 441122 | P-47D | 44-32693 | 21FS | 413FG | | MACB | Dixon, Samuel P Jr | Southport/ 10mi N |
| 441204 | P-47D | 42-29334 | 21FS | 413FG | Bluethenthal Field, NC | LAC | Cork, Joseph F | Bluethenthal Field, NC |
| 441207 | P-47D | 42-29252 | 21FS | 413FG | | TAC | Griner, Lewis H | Bluethenthal Fld |
| 441231 | UC-78B | 43-7572 | 21FS | 413FG | Bluethenthal Field, NC | FLoG | Sifford, Lynn D Jr | 4M S Redboiling Springs, TN |
| 450102 | P-47D | 42-22276 | 21FS | 413FG | Bluethenthal Field, NC | LACGL | Ennis, Wallace W | Cleveland Municipal Airport, OH |
| 460110 | P-47N | 44-88097 | 21FS | 413FG | | LAS | Hupp, James A | Okinawa/ 10mi W |
| 460708 | P-47N | 44-87816 | 21FS | 413FG | | LAC | Baker, Thomas J | Yontan AD |
| 450619 | P-47N | 44-87988 | 21FS | 413FG | | CRL | Dusseault, Albert W | Plum Strip |
| 450620 | P-47N | 44-87947 | 21FS | 413FG | | CRDF | Arnold, Winfred D | |
| 450623 | P-47N | 44-88068 | 21FS | 413FG | | TOA | Ives, James R | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-------|----------|------|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 450623 | P-47N | 44-88192 | 21FS | 413FG | | TOAEF | Manning, Robert J | |
| 450629 | P-47N | 44-87955 | 21FS | 413FG | | TOA | Ives, James R | |
| 450701 | P-47N | 44-87953 | 21FS | 413FG | APO 245 | GACEF | Cantrell, Marion C Jr | Ie Shima AF |
| 450820 | P-47N | 44-88370 | 21FS | 413FG | | TOA | Parker, Joseph F B | Ie Shima, Birch AF |
| 450823 | P-47N | 44-87843 | 21FS | 413FG | | MIS | Cleveland, Richard J | |
| 451224 | P-47N | 44-87900 | 21FS | 413FG | | MAC | Stuck, Donald H | Kadena AF/ 20mi SE |





Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 10 Oct 2010
Updated:

Sources