

23rd FIGHTER SQUADRON



LINEAGE

23rd Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 22 1939
Activated, 1 Feb 1940
Redesignated 23rd Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942
Redesignated 23rd Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 31 Mar 1946
Activated, 15 Oct 1946
Redesignated: 23rd Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled, 27 Oct 1947
Redesignated 23rd Fighter Squadron, Jet, 17 Jun 1948
Redesignated 23rd Fighter-Bomber Squadron, 20 Jan 1950
Redesignated 23rd Fighter-Day Squadron, 9 Aug 1954
Redesignated 23rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958
Redesignated 23rd Fighter Squadron, 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 1 Feb 1940
Brooks Field, TX, 1 Feb 1940
Langley Field, VA, 17 Nov 1940
Losey Field, Puerto Rico, 6 Jan 1941
St Croix, 31 May 1941
Losey Field, Puerto Rico, 15 Nov 1941
Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, 13 Dec 1941 (detachments operated from St Thomas, c. Mar 1941–
c. 6 May 1943; and Arecibo, Puerto Rico, 11 Mar–c. 16 May 1943)
Morrison Field, FL, c. 21 May 1943

Mitchel Field, NY, 16 Jun 1943
Charleston, SC, 22 Jun 1943
Galveston AAFld, TX, 18 Sep 1943
Dalhart AAFld, TX, 27 Oct 1943
Bruning AAFld, NE, 24 Dec 1943–11 Mar 1944
Kingsnorth, England, 6 Apr 1944
Brucheville, France, 3 Aug 1944
Le Mans, France, 6 Sep 1944
Athis, France, 26 Sep 1944
Juvincourt, France, 3 Oct 1944
Le Culot, Belgium, 28 Oct 1944
Aachen, Germany, 28 Mar 1945
Niedermennig, Germany, 8 Apr 1945
Kassel/Rothwesten, Germany, 21 Apr 1945–15 Feb 1946
Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb–31 Mar 1946
Howard Field, CZ, 15 Oct 1946–22 Jul 1948
Furstenfeldbruck AB, Germany, c. 17 Aug 1948
Bitburg AB, Germany, 17 Nov 1952
Spangdahlem AB, Germany, 31 Dec 1971

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Incirlik AB, Turkey, 17 Jan–15 Mar 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

36th Pursuit (later, 36th Fighter) Group, 1 Feb 1940–31 Mar 1946
36th Fighter (later, 36th Fighter-Bomber; 36th Fighter-Day) Group, 15 Oct 1946
36th Fighter-Day (later, 36th Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957
52nd Tactical Fighter (later, 52nd Fighter) Wing, 31 Dec 1971
52nd Operations Group, 31 Mar 1992

ATTACHMENTS

7440th Composite Wing, 17 Jan–15 Mar 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

YP-37, 1940
P-36, 1940–1942
P-39, 1941–1943
P-40, 1941–1943
P-47, 1943–1946
P-47, 1946–1947
P-80, 1947–1950
F-84, 1950–1953
F-86, 1953–1956
F-100, 1956–1961
F-105, 1961–1966
F-4, 1966–1991

F-16, 1987

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

F-16: SP

UNIT COLORS

Blue

COMMANDERS

Cpt Holmes, 1 Feb 1940
Maj James B. League, 6 Dec 1940
Maj Dunham, 20 Jul 1942
Cpt Joseph Kirkup, Dec 1942
Maj Joe Giltner, 6 May 1943
Maj Hallock P. K. Walmsley, 16 Jun 1943
Maj H. C. Junkerman, Mar 1944
Maj Richard T. Deabler, 13 Apr 1944
Maj Alexander W. Cortner, 10 May 1944
Maj Albert E. Miles, Jul 1944
Maj Alfred A. Weegar, 22 Jan 1945
Cpt Walter B. Walker Jr., Jul 1945
Maj Louis Yeager, Oct 1945
Maj Louis H. Norley, 10 Nov 1945-unkn
LTC Hallock P. K. Walmsley, 15 Oct 1946
LTC Rodney E. Gunther, 14 Apr 1947
Maj Wallace B. Frank, 19 Nov 1948
LTC Rodney E. Gunther, 14 Dec 1948
LTC Charles W. Boedeker, 3 Feb 1949
Maj George H. Crist, Oct 1949
Maj Harold H. Broach, 10 Feb 1950;
LTC George F. Ceuleers, 28 Aug 1950
LTC Lawrence J. Pickett, 26 Dec 1950
Maj Charles V. Garino, by Dec 1951
LTC Marvin E. Childs, by Dec 1952
Maj Riegel W. Davis, by Oct 1953
LTC Sylvester V. Burke, 9 Dec 1953
Maj Carl J. Luksic, 1954
Maj Robert D. Brown, 1 Jul 1955
LTC Edward C. Fletcher, 1 Sep 1957
Maj Erwin A. Hesse, by Jul 1958
LTC Elmer E. Springer Jr., by Dec 1960
LTC Robert E. Wayne, 1 Sep 1963
Maj William W. Pinner, by Jun 1965
LTC Parks M. Rea, 1 Jul 1966

LTC Robert L. Larsh Jr., 1 Sep 1966
LTC Charles P. Busick, by Dec 1968
LTC Paul S. Cleland, by Jun 1969
LTC John J. Gaudion, 24 Aug 1970
LTC Delbert M. Corum, 1 Jan 1972
Maj Thomas A. Baker, 26 Feb 1973
LTC Thomas E. Rowney, 1 Mar 1975
LTC Henry V. Hall, 16 Jul 1976
LTC Charles P. Winters, 1 Jul 1977
LTC Richard C. Fairlamb, 19 Dec 1978
LTC Ronald E. Henry, 3 Aug 1979
LTC Robert W. Thompson, 30 Jul 1981
LTC Douglas M. Nix, 4 Apr 1983
LTC Lesley L. Kersey, 15 Jun 1984
LTC Curtis H. Emery II, 12 Jul 1985
LTC Dale E. Hollrah, 20 Oct 1986
LTC Anthony W. Groves, 30 Dec 1987
LTC David L. Moody, 3 Oct 1989
LTC Jeffrey G. Blanchette, 12 Jun 1991
LTC William F. Rake, 26 Mar 1993
LTC Leslie D. Fielder, 10 Nov 1994
LTC Robert P. Steel, 10 Jun 1996
LTC Michael R. Boera, 5 Jun 1997
LTC Richard A. Reynolds, 3 Jun 1999
LTC Steven S. Kempf, 12 Jun 2001
LTC John W. Specht, 19 Jun 2003
LTC William A. Woodcock, 26 Aug 2005
LTC Steven A. Vlasak, 6 Apr 2007
LTC Michael D. Lay, 30 Oct 2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

France, 1 Sep 1944

Germany, 12 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

1 Sep 1990–26 Feb 1991

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

May 1956–May 1958

1 Jan–31 Dec 1968

1 Jul 1978–30 Jun 1980

1 Jul 1991–30 Jun 1993

1 Jul 1993–30 Jun 1995

1 Aug 1995–31 Jul 1997

1 Jul 1997–30 Jun 1999

24 Mar–10 Jun 1999

1 Jul 1999–30 Jun 2001

1 Jul 2001–30 Jun 2003

1 Jul 2003–30 Jun 2005

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

1 Oct–17 Dec 1944

18 Dec 1944–15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM

On a Grayed Yellow Orange disc, a caricatured Red, White, and Blue hawk, wearing Tan flight jacket and aviator's helmet, Blue goggles, and Brown boxing gloves, diving toward sinister base, and emitting White speed lines to rear. COPYRIGHT—Walt Disney. (Approved, 23 Sep 1943)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine patrols, 12 Dec 1941–c. Apr 1943. Combat in ETO, 8 May 1944–8 May 1945.

Occupational force, Germany, May 1945–Feb 1946. Combat in Southwest Asia, Jan–Feb 1991.

The 23rd Fighter Squadron, the "Fighting Hawks," was activated Dec. 22, 1939, at Langley Field, Va., as the 23rd Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) flying the P-36 Hawk. The unit moved to Kelly Field, Texas, in January 1940, and was equipped with the YP-37. In January 1941, the squadron moved to Ponce, Puerto Rico, for training on the P-36 Aircobra and P-40 Warhawk.

After Dec. 7, 1941, the 23rd PS patrolled the islands of the Caribbean for enemy aircraft and submarines. The squadron was renamed the 23rd Fighter Squadron in 1942, and converted to the P-47 Thunderbolt in June 1943. In March 1944, the 23rd FS deployed to Royal Air Force Kingsnorth, England, and 9th Air Force's 36th Fighter Group. The squadron earned the Distinguished Unit Citation in September 1944 for missions flown from England and forward bases in France supporting the D-Day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge.

Between October 1944 and January 1945, while operating from airfields in Belgium, the squadron earned two citations in the Belgian Army Order of the Day as well as the Belgian Fourragere. The unit was awarded a second Distinguished Unit Citation for action in Germany during April 1945.

Inactivated in March 1946, the squadron was reactivated in October 1946 at Howard Field, Canal Zone, Panama, flying the P-47 and P-80 Shooting Star. In July 1948, the squadron returned to Germany at Furstenfeldbruck. Here, the 23rd FS helped form the Skyblazers -- an aerial demonstration team and forerunner to today's Thunderbirds.

In November 1952, the squadron moved to Bitburg Air Base, Germany, as part of the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing. In September 1954, the squadron converted to the F-84 Thunderjet and was redesignated the 23rd Day Fighter Squadron. It was the first squadron in Europe to fly the F-86 Sabre (1956), the F-100C Super Sabre (1956), the F-105 Thunderchief (1961), and the F-4D Phantom II (1966). During this period, the squadron received two Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards.

The 23rd Tactical Fighter Squadron was assigned to Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and in January 1972 became part of the 52nd Tactical Fighter Wing. The 23rd converted to F-4E and F-4G Wild Weasels in 1982 and began flying defense suppression missions. In July 1987, the F-16C Fighting Falcon replaced the F-4E.

In January 1991, at the outbreak of the Gulf War, the 23rd FS deployed to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. During Operation Proven Force, squadron F-16Cs and F-4Gs flew nearly 1,000 defense suppression, combat air patrol and interdiction missions over Iraq without a single loss. The squadron earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor for its part in driving the Iraqi army from Kuwait.

In September 1991, the squadron's remaining F-4Gs were replaced by F-16Cs. In July 1993, the 23rd FS was the first U.S. unit to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina for Operation Deny Flight. In January 1994, the squadron received the first F-16CJ Block 50 aircraft.

The squadron completed conversion to the latest version of the F-16CJ in January 1995 and became U.S. Air Forces in Europe's only defense suppression squadron. In September of that same year, members of the 23rd FS took part in Operation Deliberate Forge -- the largest air assault in NATO history. The unit flew 224 sorties during the air campaign against Bosnian Serb forces.

Pilots from the 23rd FS were the first to employ high-speed anti-radiation missiles (HARM) in combat. The squadron's efforts contributed to the peace process and the resulting Dayton Agreement, which ended more than four years of bloody conflict in the Balkans.

For their outstanding contributions to the U.S. Air Forces in Europe's mission, the 23rd FS was selected in May 1996 to receive the Commander's Trophy as the "Best Fighter Squadron in the Command," their third time to win this distinction.

February to June 1999, the 23rd FS deployed to Aviano AB, Italy, where it was assigned to the 31st Air Expeditionary Wing for Operation Allied Force. The squadron supported the NATO mission to degrade and damage the military and security structure that the Yugoslav President used to destroy the Albanian majority in Kosovo. During Allied Force the 23rd FS flew over 1000 combat sorties and fired 191 HARM shots to silence the over 100 surface to air missile sites in Kosovo and Yugoslavia. The squadron was repeatedly noted for bravery in the face of danger while flying these combat operations in Allied Force.

From November 2000 to March 2001 the 23rd FS deployed in support of Operation Southern Watch to patrol the southern no-fly zone over Iraq. During the deployment the squadron provided suppression of enemy air defenses in both air-to-ground and air-to-air roles. In March of 2001, the 23rd provided SEAD for the largest strike in Iraq since Operation Desert Fox. During the strike to take out command and control facilities in Iraq, the 23rd ensured the safety of all allied strikers.

Capt. Luke A. Johnson, 26, was killed when his F-16 fighter crashed near Lanscheid, Germany, March 20. He was on a nighttime training mission from the 23rd Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, when air traffic controllers said they lost radio and radar contact. Johnson, who was from Tucson, Ariz., crashed in a flat, wooded, unpopulated area along a logging road. At the time, visibility was five miles with a light rain and fog, according to the Air Force. A board of USAF officials will investigate. 2002

36th Tactical Fighter Wing
Bitburg AB, WGER
23 TFS Blue

History. Wheelus Field; The Story of the US Air Force in Libya. The Early days 1944-1952. R. L. Swetzer. Historical Division Office of Information USAFE. 15 Jan 1965

Regular gunnery training by USAFEs F-80's was resumed on 22 March 1950, with the arrival at Wheelus of several aircraft of the 23rd Fighter-Bomber Squadron. The F-80's ran into trouble during the first week of April due to fuel contamination, and they were grounded until 16 April. Two days later, the jet fighters left for Germany. Investigation revealed rust and other foreign matter in the fuel furnished by Shell-Petrolibya and the need to replace a pipeline connecting the storage tank with the filling point.

On 7 June 1951, the cycle was resumed when the 22d Fighter-Bomber Squadron arrived at Wheelus. The following day, an F-84 of the 22d Fighter-Bomber Squadron experienced a flame-out and made a crash landing in the Mediterranean. A crash boat was standing by and picked up the pilot, who had minor injuries only, a scant six minutes after he hit the water. On 26 June the 23d Fighter-Bomber Squadron replaced the 22d.

Throughout the rest of 1951, USAFE's F-84's continued to use Wheelus for gunnery training and transition flying. On 1 August the 526th Fighter-Bomber Squadron arrived to replace the 23d Fighter-Bomber Squadron, which had left for home on 18 July. One of the 526th's F-84's crashed just short of the new Wheelus Field perimeter wall on 15 August after an engine failure. The pilot escaped with minor injuries.

The last unit of the year was the 92d Fighter Squadron from Manston, England, which arrived at Wheelus on 30 November 1951 and departed for home on 19 December. The first for 1952 was the 53d Fighter-Bomber Squadron which arrived on approximately 15 Jan 1952. This unit was, in turn, replaced on 25 Feb by the 23d Fighter-Bomber Squadron, which brought with it approximately 27 officers, 150 airmen, 25 F-84's and two B-26 target tow aircraft. The 23d was at Wheelus primarily for transition training.

23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron (Nail FACS)

The 23rd TASS formed in Thailand in April, 1966, flying forward air control (FAC) missions and using the call sign "Nail." After the Vietnam war, the squadron joined the 602nd at Bergstrom AFB, Texas flying O-2s, and moved, without personnel or equipment, to DM on July 1, 1980. After receiving OA-37Bs in 1981, the squadron, in October, 1987, began a year-long conversion to become the first OA-10 unit. After serving in Desert Storm, the 23rd TASS inactivated on November 1, 1991, transferring its assets to the 354th FS.

A red tail cap was used as the squadron color on the first OA-10A. The 23rd later switched to blue with three yellow stars, the reverse of the 22nd TASS.

Photographed in March 1988, OA-10A 77-0223, the 23rd Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS) flagship, carries the 23rd TASS blue tail cap with three yellow stars.

OA-10A 77-0210, photographed on October 13, 1987, is marked as a 23rd TASS jet and carries the blue tail cap with yellow stars markings, whose colors are the reverse of its sister squadron the 22nd TASTS.

OA-10A 76-0516, photographed on May 1, 1992 is carrying three MK82 AIR 500 pound bombs under each wing.

23 TFS
F100C
54-1923

36th Fighter Day Wing

The 36th Fighter Group was activated in February of 1940 and allocated four squadrons: the 22nd, 23rd, 32nd and 53rd. After extensive training with P-36, the group was re-equipped with P-39s and P-40s. In 1943 it was once again re-equipped, this time with the P-47 which it operated until 1947.

In 1947 the group re-equipped with the P-80 and in 1948 the entire unit moved from Panama to Germany to become part of USAFE. The unit went through a series of designations including the 36th Fighter Bomber Group in 1950 (F-84E) and 36th Fighter Day Wing on 9 August 1954 (F-86F/F-100C) and finally the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing on 8 July 1958.

During the Summer of 1955, the first two RF-100As arrived in Germany for an operational evaluation and on 12 March 1956, the first F-100Cs landed at Bitburg Air Base, Germany. The F-100Cs were at first assigned to the 45th Day Fighter Squadron at Sidi Slimane, Morocco, since the 45th was responsible for F-100 transition training for the USAFE units.

The 23rd Fighter Day Squadron was the first to become fully equipped with the F-100C, after flying their aircraft back from Morocco. They were quickly followed by the 22nd and 53rd Squadrons.

The 36th Wing's four squadrons were the 22nd (Red), 23rd (Blue), 32nd (Green) and 53rd (Yellow). All were based at Bitburg except the 32nd Squadron which was based at Soesterberg in the Netherlands. On 15 August 1956 the first Super Sabre arrived at Soesterberg for the squadron and the aircraft carried Insignia Red fins, horizontal stabilizers and rear fuselage areas. During December of 1957 the 461st Fighter Day Squadron was assigned to the wing and based at Hahn, Germany. The squadron chose Black and Yellow for its squadron colors.

Squadron markings applied to the F-100Cs consisted of a solid intake color with three diagonally applied broad tail bands, also in the appropriate squadron color. All squadrons carried White borders on these markings except the 53rd Squadron which carried Black and the 461st which carried Yellow. Squadron badges were carried on both sides of the fuselage below the cockpit.

In 1959, the 32nd TFS came under the control of the Netherlands and so the squadron replaced the green intake and tail bands with the Red, White and Blue (the colors of the Netherlands flag). The 36th TFW Commander's aircraft (54-1996) had a Green intake and tail bands of Red, Blue, Green, Yellow and Black (top to bottom) representing the squadrons he commanded. An F-100C (54-2013) of the 461st Squadron was painted with a Black intake band and tail bands of Green, Red, Blue, Yellow and Black (top to bottom). An F-100C (54-2000) with the Buzz Number FW-000 was flown by the commander of the 461st Squadron.

The 36th TFW formed the "Skyblazers" aerial demonstration team in May of 1949 and controlled it until it was taken over by the 48th Fighter Bomber Wing. The 36th TFW once again regained control from October of 1956 until 1962, during which time the F-100Cs were painted in very striking Red, White and Blue markings with the "Skyblazers" badge on the port side of the fuselage and the USAFE insignia on the starboard side.

During 1959, the 461st Squadron was deactivated and, in 1960, the 32nd Squadron became an Interceptor Squadron assigned to the 86th Fighter Interceptor Wing (F-102s). The remaining three squadrons retained their F-100Cs until 1961 when they were re-equipped with F-105s.

Known Aircraft:

22nd TFS: 54-1931

23rd TFS: 54-1865, 54-1926 and 54-2015

32nd TFS: 54-1871, 54-1878, 54-1877, 54-1885, 54-1888, 54-1901,

54-1904, 54-1923, 54-1996 and 54-2015 53rd TFS: 54-1955, 54-1962, 54-1972 and 54-2007

461st TFS: 54-1982, 54-1997, 54-1895, 54-1899, 54-2013 and 54-2000

F-16s of the US Air Forces in Europe began a two-month rotational assignment at Incirlik AB, Turkey, in January, after a hiatus of more than sixteen years. F-16 pilots from the 52nd Fighter Wing's 22nd Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem AB, Germany, arrived 3 January. They were replaced when pilots from the 23rd FS arrived on 2 February. More than 650 sorties were flown between the two squadrons. The successful rotational training concluded at the end of February. Access to the Konya AB bombing range was granted by Turkish officials. The weather in Turkey was considerably better than the winter weather in Germany, which improved the quality of the training flights. 2007

Another of the original subordinate squadrons of the 36th Pursuit Group (Interceptor), the 23rd Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) was activated on 1 February 1940, at Brooks Field, Texas, later moving to Langley Field, Virginia.

The Squadron moved to Losey Field (Ponce), Puerto Rico aboard the USAT "Chateau-Thierry" on 2 January 1941 and, from there, moved to Benedict Field, St. Croix on 29 May (aboard the same vessel). They later returned to Puerto Rico aboard the USAT "Thomas Barry."

Like its sister units, the 23rd PS operated a mix of Bell P-39's and Curtiss P-40's, and was charged with the aerial defense (initially) of the north coast of Puerto Rico.

During the early months of the war, the unit P-39's and P-40's were loaded with 300 pound general purpose bombs and launched "on many occasions" for submarine searches and, while several were confirmed as "sighted," no claims were made. The "iron" bombs proved to be exceptionally poor weapons for anti-submarine warfare, but did cause the subs to "keep their heads down."

Early January 1942 was a busy time for the unit. The main body at Losey Field had 14 P-39D's and four P-36A's, while a detachment at Bourne Field, St. Thomas, had eight other P-39D's (plus an AT-6) and three Curtiss P-36A's. By the end of January, the P-36A's had apparently all been traded in for P-40C's and P-40E's, and eight of these were at Bourne Field by that time, with four more at Losey (with the AT-6).

On 28 January 1942, the Squadron moved to Vega Baja, Puerto Rico and, like other Antilles units, during its Caribbean sojourn, the unit was alerted on at least two occasions for a possible attack on Vichy French Martinique. In July 1942 (at which time the unit had the obligatory sum of nine P-39D's, including 41-6860) and May 1943, aircraft were actually inspected, bombs fused and hung on racks for such an attack, and some wore belly auxiliary fuel tanks.

By December 1942, the unit had undergone yet further equipment changes, with the main body at Vega Baja with 11 P-39D's and six P-40E's (the latter all detached to Bourne Field, St. Thomas) and, at least on paper, four Curtiss P-36A's.

"B" Flight of the Squadron occupied Arecibo aerodrome on Puerto Rico on 11 March 1943 and, at this time, took on strength 10 pilots formerly of the 32nd Fighter Squadron which were there at the time.

The only documented serious accident suffered by the unit during its relatively brief (29 months) tour in the Caribbean came on 28 April 1943 (the month before the unit rotated back to the U.S.) when LT Donald Bergquist crashed a P-40 into the Quartermaster Supply building at Arecibo, although he apparently survived the episode.

Tail markings of F-4D, 62-7555, of the 23rd TFS, 52nd TFW, Spangdahlem, Germany. Fin cap is red. All tail lettering and numbering is in white.

F-4D, 66-8797, of the 23rd TFS/52nd TFW, in May 1976. Aircraft is painted in standard AF camouflage pattern of tan/F.S. 30219; gray/F.S. 36622; dark green/F.S. 34079; and medium green/F.S. 34102. Vertical fin tip "flag" consists of white star on dark blue background with red and white stripes. Tail code and serial number are in white. Unit badge on intake cheek is orange with blue, brown, and yellow bird. Canopy frame rails are white with red outline and with crew names in green.

23rd Pursuit Squadron (36th Pursuit Group)

HQ-Not organized 1939-40; Kelly Field, TX, 1940-41; Losey Field, PR, 1941; St. Croix, VI, 1941; Losey Field, PR, 1941
Constituted in the Regular Army on 22 December 1939 and assigned to the 36th Pursuit Group. Activated on 1 February 1940 at Kelly Field, TX. Transferred on 17 November 1940 to Langley Field, VA. Departed 2 January 1941 from the port of Newport News on the U.S.A.T. Chateau Thierry for duty stations in Puerto Rico. Arrived 6 January 1941 at Ponce, PR. Transferred to Losey Field, PR, and, as part of the 36th Pursuit Group, assigned to the Caribbean Defense Command. Transferred on 31 May 1941 to St. Croix, VI. Transferred on 15 November 1941 to Losey Field, PR. Location 7 December 1941—Losey Field, PR.
Status: Active in the U. S. Air Force as the 23rd Fighter Squadron at Spangdahlem A.B., Germany.
Commanders, 23rd Pursuit Squadron
Capt. Joseph A. Bolger 1 Feb 40-Dec 40 1st Lt. Frederick W. Baggett Dec 40-ao Jan 41
Capt. Ralph E. Holmes ao Nov 41-ao Dec 41

On 20 March 2002, at 2108L (2008Z), an F-16CJ assigned to the 52d Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, impacted the ground in a wooded area 1.9 nautical miles northeast of runway 23 at Spangdahlem Air Base. The F-16CJ mishap aircraft, Serial Number 91-0415, was destroyed upon impact. The mishap pilot, assigned to the 23d Fighter Squadron, 52d Fighter Wing, was fatally injured.

The mishap pilot, call sign Wolf 03, was number 3 of a 4-ship formation conducting a night tactical intercept training mission. He was current and qualified to fly the planned mission. Mission supervision, preparation, and planning were sufficient. Preflight, departure and training engagements were uneventful. Upon reaching bingo fuel, Wolf 03 departed the formation and began his return to base. The pilot flew a PAR approach to runway 23. The radar final controller, a trainee, conducted the approach under supervision of a qualified trainer. The pilot was qualified to fly the PAR to approach minimums of 300 ft and 1 mile visibility.

The forecast recovery weather briefed to the mishap pilot was 1000 ft broken, 2000 ft overcast, visibility 8000 meters (5 miles) and light rain. The weather encountered by Wolf 03 on departure was a 3000 ft ceiling and 8000 meter visibility. The weather provided to the pilot during arrival was an inaccurate 1924Z pilot report (PIREP) for an aircraft breaking out at 3000 ft above ground level with 2 mile visibility. Based on observations, PIREPs, and witness testimony, the weather on final approach at the time of the mishap was most likely a 500 ft ceiling, visibility 6000 meters (4 miles), and light rain. The approach was flown in darkness, 2 hours and 22 minutes after a 1746Z sunset.

The mishap aircraft was functional at the time of the mishap. The aircraft was fully mission capable at launch time and the mishap pilot contacted the squadron 10 minutes prior to the mishap reporting no maintenance problems.

Based on clear and convincing evidence, the primary cause of this accident was the mishap pilot's failure to initiate a missed approach as directed by the radar final controller. While still in the weather and too far right of course for a safe approach, the pilot acknowledged the

controller's safety alert, lowered the aircraft nose and turned toward the runway in a continued attempt to position the aircraft for landing. An inadequate crosscheck then resulted in an excessive rate of descent followed by controlled flight into terrain.

500511	F-80B	45-8600	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LACMF	Broach, Richard H.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
500612	F-80B	45-8664	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	MF	Generous, Oliver E.	5 Mi S Kassel
500616	F-80B	45-8508	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	GC	King, Myles A.	7 Mi NW Roth
500805	F-80B	45-8487	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	BB	Gunther, Charles W.	Schweinfurt Gunnery Range
500809	F-80B	45-8681	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LAC	Wilson, Clifford A	Furstenfeldbruck AB
500818	F-80B	45-8675	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LAC	Falls, Harry.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
500911	F-80B	45-8684	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LACEF	Shumway, George R.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
500916	F-80B	45-8487	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LAC	Grenwood, Travis M.	Rhein Main AB
500917	F-80B	45-8606	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	KSF	Gregory, Richard B.	Oschsenfurt
501114	F-84E	49-2170	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LAC	Pater, Robert L.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
501121	F-84E	49-2285	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LACW	DeBerardinis, James.	Rhein-Main AB
510207	F-84E	49-2173	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	FLoG	Kelly, Conley L.	2 Mi E Kothmaissling
510207	F-84E	49-2168	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	FLoG	Arnold, Tom M	1 MiW Straubing
510329	T-33A	49-0883	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	BOF	Pattillo, Charles C.	Waldrun
510420	F-84E	49-2167	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	KCRMF	Carpenter, Albert W.	10 Mi SE Schweinfurt
510504	F-84E	49-2172	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LACMFW	Gunther, Charles W.	Giebelstadt Airfield

510504	F-84E	49-2291	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LACW	Hellstrom, Bernard A.	Giebelstadt Airfield
510507	F-84E	49-2169	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	MACB	Johnson, Lester L.	15 Mi W Giebelstadt AB
510603	F-84E	49-2296	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	LAC	Ahrens, George L.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
511219	F-84E	49-2185	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	CBLEF	Scholtz, John C.	Furstenfeldbruck AB
511228	F-84E	49-2289	23FBS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	MF	Haynes, William E.	Ingoldstadt
530111	F-84E	49-2239	23FBS	36FBG	Bitburg AB, Germany	TOA	Davis, Riegel W	Bitburg AB, Germany
500707	F-80B	45-8650	23FS	36FBG	Furstenfeldbruck AB, GER	CRLEF	Gunther, Charles W.	5 Mi NE Landshut
430130	P-39D	41-6851	23FS	36FG		KCR	Clark, Charles N	San Juan/ 16mi SW
430226	P-39D	41-6915	23FS	36FG		BOMF	Meffan, George A	Catano/ 2mi W
430314	P-39D	41-6887	23FS	36FG		CBL	Giltner, Joe H	Vieques Is
430314	P-39D	41-6887	23FS	36FG		CBL	Giltner, Joe H	Vieques Is
430403	P-40C	40-13411	23FS	36FG		KCR	Adams, George W Jr	Arecibo AB
431120	P-47D	42-22349	23FS	36FG	Dalhart AAB, Dalhart, TX	FLEF	Greer, Jack P	½ mi W of Dalhart AAB, Aux Fld #2, Dalhart, TX
431123	P-47D	42-22578	23FS	36FG	Aux Fld #2, Dalhart AAB, TX	MAC	Cole, James L	Aux Fld #2, Dalhart AAB, Dalhart, TX
431123	P-47D	42-74769	23FS	36FG	Aux Fld #2, Dalhart AAB, TX	MAC	Pardridge, Clint E	Aux Fld #2, Dalhart AAB, Dalhart, TX
440225	P-47D	42-23279	23FS	36FG	Bruning AAF, Bruning, NE	TOAEF	Miles, Albert E	Wichita, KS
440421	P-47D	42-75390	23FS	36FG	418	CRLDF	Meltzer, J (NMI)	Kingsnorth/Sta 418
440803	P-47D	42-25869	23FS	36FG	A16	LAC	Hobrecht, Freddie (NMI)	Brucheville/A-16

440803	P-47D	42-8647	23FS	36FG	A16	LAC	Pavilonis, Alcred (NMI)	Brucheville/A-16
440906	P-47D	44-19587	23FS	36FG	A35	KLAC	Weyand, John R	Le Mans/A-35
440908	P-47D	42-28290	23FS	36FG	A35	TAC	Montgomery, Ralph E	Le Mans/A-35
440908	P-47D	42-27340	23FS	36FG	A35	TAC	Coe, James C	Le Mans/A-35
441005	P-47D	42-7919	23FS	36FG	A68	TOA	Madden, Don L	Juvincourt/A-68
441029	L-4H	43-889	23FS	36FG		FL	Smith, Paul E	Kesselt/ 2mi N
441029	P-47D	42-26055	23FS	36FG	A89	TOA	Werts, Dean L	Le Culot/A-89
450314	P-47D	42-27204	23FS	36FG	A89	TOA	Cahill, Robert J	Le Culot/A-89
450319	P-47D	42-28835	23FS	36FG	A89	TOAGL	Bergath, Chester O Jr	Le Culot/A-89
450319	P-47D	44-33110	23FS	36FG	A89	TOAFX	Lenzer, Glenn C	Le Culot/A-89
450320	P-47D	44-20467	23FS	36FG	A89	TAC	Camp, James W	Le Culot/A-89
450320	P-47D	42-28466	23FS	36FG	A89	TOA	Harrison, Leroy W	Le Culot/A-89
450328	P-47D	42-76085	23FS	36FG	Y46	TAC	Harrison, Leroy W	Aachen/Y-46
450413	P-47D	42-25779	23FS	36FG	Y62	TOA	Anderson, Merrill E	Neidermendig/Y-62
450425	P-47D	42-76548	23FS	36FG	R12	LAC	Goldstein, Harold (NMI)	Kassel/R-12
460207	P-47D	44-32777	23FS	36FG		CBLMF	Stutzman, Milton B	Rothwesten/1mi ESE
460417	P-47N	44-89030	23FS	36FG		DTC	Kowtko, Nicholas (NMI)	Tiquisate/ nr in Pacific
470417	P-47N	45-50002	23FS	36FG		BO	Burns, Robert J	Tiquisate/ 14mi SSE

470518	P-47N	44-89117	23FS	36FG		KCR	Fairman, William T	Balboa/ 2 1/2mi NE
470703	P-47N	44-89020	23FS	36FG	Howard Fld, CZ	TACDF	Jones, John H Jr	Lowry Fld
470812	P-47N	43-50046	23FS	36FG	Howard Field, CZ	LAC	Lacefield, James H	Howard Field, CZ
470814	P-47N	44-89110	23FS	36FG	Howard Field, CZ	TAC	Kammeher, George E	Howard Field, CZ
441104	P-47D	42-28915	23FS	36FG	A89	LAC	Miles, Albert E	Le Culot/A-89
441114	P-47D	42-28947	23FS	36FG	A89	LAC	Magnuson, Morris W	Le Culot/A-89
441125	P-47D	42-28405	23FS	36FG	A89	KCR	Williamson, Herbert A	Hougaorde/ nr {J-9945}
450710	C-47A	42-108872	23FS	36FG	R12	LAC	Goldman, Henry E	RAF Penshurst
450727	P-47D	42-76141W	23FS	36FG	R12	CR	Kriszcickmitis, Francis M	Kassel/ nr R-12
451002	P-47D	42-27204	23FS	36FG	R12	LAC	Hall, James H	Kassel/R-12
420716	P-40E	40-563	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	FLMF	McCroskey, Joseph L	Borinquen Field, PR
420720	P-39D	41-6851	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	LACNU	Cournoyer, Bertrant T	Vega Baja Airdrome, PR
420816	P-39D	41-6876	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	LAC	Meffan George A Jr	Vega Baja, PR
420827	P-39D	41-6851	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	TAC	Bell, Dale E	Vega Baja, PR
420925	P-36A	38-123	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, Ponce, PR	LACGL	Ruehlen, Lane B	Arecibo Air Field, PR
421014	P-36A	38-107	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, Ponce, PR	KCRGC	Laws, Raymond D	Casa Blanca, PR
421112	P-39D	41-6919	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	KCRGC	Green, Roy F	5 mi S ofCorozal, PR
421205	P-39D	41-6876	23FS	36FG	Losey Field, PR	LACMF	Gewehr, Ralph P	Borinquen Field, PR

420921	AT-6	40-2133	23FS		Losey Field, PR	LACGL	McCulla, Robert M	Vega Baja, PR
421013	P-40E	40-563	23FS		Losey Field, PR	LACGL	Moore, John K	Bourne Field, St Thomas VGI
411212	P-40C	41-13514	23PS	36FG	Losey Field, Ponce, PR	TOA	David, Charles G	Beane Field, Saint Lucia, BWI
410219	P-36A	38-117	23PS	36PG	Ponce Air Base, PR	LAC	Garrett, S N	San Juan, PR
410415	P-36A	38-104	23PS	36PG	Ponce Air Base, PR	LACMF	Curry, W. L.	Ponce Air Base, PR
410823	P-36A	38-114	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, PR	LACGL	Giltner, Joe H	Benedict Field, Virgin Islands
410828	RP-40C	41-13364	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, PR	LAC	Shrawder, Gerald R	Benedict Field, Virgin Islands
410829	RP-36A	38-166	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, PR	LACGL	Giltner, Joe H	Benedict Field, Virgin Islands
411001	RP-40C	41-13510	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, PR	CBLTO	Hunter, Robert D	Losey Field, PR
411007	RP-40C	41-13457	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, Ponce, PR	LAC	Manbeck, Lee P	Benedict Field, St Croix, VGI
411216	P-39D	41-6919	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, Ponce, PR	LACGL	Mitchell, David M	Losey Field, Ponce, PR
420112	P-39D	41-6852	23PS	36PG	Losey Field, PR	KMIS	Doherty, John J	8 mi S of Tunna Point, PR
410623	P-40	41-13520	23PS	36PI	Losey Field, PR	TOA	Kirkup, Joseph K	Benedict Field, St.Croix, VGI
410623	P-40C	41-13518	23PS	36PI	Losey Field, PR	TOA	[Parked Aircraft]	Benedict Field, St.Croix, VGI
410623	P-40C	41-13515	23PS	36PI	Losey Field, PR	TOA	[Parked Aircraft]	Benedict Field, St.Croix, VGI

410623	P-40C	41-13516	23PS	36PI	Losey Field, PR	TOA	[Parked Aircraft]	Benedict Field, St.Croix, VGI
410716	P-40C	41-13517	23PS	36PI	Losey Field, PR	KCR	Snider, Robert Nathan	Benedict Field, St.Croix, VGI
420306	P-40E	40-548	23PS	38PG	Losey Field, PR	KCRGC	David, Charles G	10 mi S of Cruz Bay, St Thomas, VGI
400510	BC-1	38-434	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	LACGL	Horton, Clarence F.	Brooks Field, TX
400515	BC-1	38-408	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	LACGL	Walton, Alfred V.	Corpus Christi, TX
400528	BC-1I	38-400	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	LAC	Toft, Walter J.	Brooks Field, TX
400528	BC-1	38-415	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	TAC	Sturgis, J. E.	Brooks Field, TX
400611	BC-1I	37-432	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	TAC	Ruggles, John H.	San Marcos Airport, TX
400725	BC-1I	37-446	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	TAC	Wildes, Thomas	Brooks Field, TX
400725	BC-1	38-415	23PS		Brooks Field, San Antonio, TX	TAC	(parked aircraft)	Brooks Field, TX
420605	P-39D	41-6915	23PS		Losey Field, PR	LAC	Courmeyer, Bertrand T.	Vega Baja Airdrome, PR

440725	P-47	42-25984	36	23	
450314	P-47	42-28927	36	23	







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Sources
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