

32 AIR OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

32 Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) constituted, 22 Dec 1939
Activated, 1 Feb 1940
Redesignated 32 Fighter Squadron, 15 May 1942
Inactivated, 15 Oct 1946
Redesignated 32 Fighter-Day Squadron, 9 May 1955
Activated, 8 Sep 1955
Redesignated 32 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958
Redesignated 32 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 8 Jul 1959
Redesignated 32 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Jul 1969
Redesignated 32 Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1991
Inactivated 1 July 1994
Redesignated 32 Air Operations Squadron 1 Jul 1994
Inactivated, 1 Nov 2005

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 1 Feb 1940
Brooks Field, TX, 1 Feb 1940
Langley Field, VA, 18 Nov 1940
Losey Field, PR, 6 Jan 1941 (detachment operated from Arecibo, PR, 11 Dec 1941-19 Feb 1942)
Arecibo, PR, 19 Feb 1942
Hato Field, Curacao, 9 Mar 1943 (detachments operated from Dakota Field, Aruba, 9 Mar 1943-Mar 1944; and Losey Field, PR, 9 Mar-4 Jun 1943)
France Field, CZ, 13 Mar 1944

Howard Field, CZ, 10 Jan 1945-15 Oct 1946
Camp New Amsterdam, Soesterberg, Netherlands, 8 Sep 1955
Kapaun Air Station, Germany, 1 Jul 1994–1 Nov 2005

ASSIGNMENTS

36 Pursuit (later Fighter) Group, 1 Feb 1940
Antilles Air Command, 3 Aug 1943
XXVI Fighter Command, 13 Mar 1944
6 Fighter Wing, 25 Aug-15 Oct 1946
36 Fighter Day Group, 8 Sep 1955
36 Fighter Day (later Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957
86 Fighter-Interceptor Wing, 8 Apr 1960
86 Air Division, 18 Nov 1961
Seventeenth Air Force, 1 November 1968
32 Tactical Fighter Group, 16 Nov 1989
32 Air Operations Group, 1 Jul 1994–1 Nov 2005

WEAPON SYSTEMS

YP-37, 1940
P-36, 1940-1943
P-40, 1942
P-39, 1942
P-38, 1945-1946
P-47N, 1946
F-86, 1955-1956
F-100, 1956-1960
F-102, 1960
F-4E, 1969
F-15, 1978–1994

COMMANDERS

Capt T. J. Wiles, 1 Feb 1940-Oct 1940
Capt Charles A. Harrington, Oct 1940-15 Jul 1941
Unknown, 15 Jul 1941-7 Dec 1941

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



32 Pursuit Squadron emblem: Confining their operations to small patrol areas, the single-motored ships of the 32 Pursuit Squadron employ tactics which relate primarily to their own home ground at Ponce Air Base, Puerto Rico. However, while they are trained to intercept attacks made on their own or adjacent territory, they may if need be, take part in more extensive fighting operations, for they are capable of incredible speed and are highly alert and maneuverable. Members of the squadron, when requesting a Disney-designed insignia, suggested one embodying the idea of one arrow being intercepted in its flight by another arrow striking its shaft. However, since they presume to be the "goats" of the air corps, their insignia in the squadron colors of blue and gold, shows a menacing goat's head intercepting and stopping an arrow in flight.





32 Fighter Squadron emblem: On a light turquoise blue disc, border light yellow orange, edged black, a caricatured, brown and white. The Wolfhounds insignia was designed by the Walt Disney Studios during World War II to symbolize the squadrons mission of searching for enemy submarines operating in groups called "wolfpacks" in the Caribbean. (Approved, 2 Aug 1945)



32 Fighter Interceptor Squadron



32 Tactical Fighter Squadron



32 Fighter Squadron

To indicate the squadron's association with the Dutch, the squadron patch was superimposed inside a wreath and crown device during 1959. The crown symbolized royalty, and the wreath with oranges represented an orange tree — the traditional symbol of the Dutch Royal Family (the House of Orange). An official application to adopt the crest as the unit's official insignia was sent to President Dwight D. Eisenhower who approved the insignia. The squadron was later referred to as the first "Royal United States Squadron" in the world. A motto — Honor, Courage, and Vigilance — was adopted some fourteen years later on 16 May 1969.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

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 18 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.

In 1954, the Netherlands government agreed, at the instigation of NATO, to accept the offer of the American government to deploy a squadron of American military planes. The task of the squadron would be to provide a contribution to Dutch air defense, within the context of NATO. The 512th Fighter Day Squadron (FDS), stationed at RAF Manston in Great Britain, was detailed by the Headquarters of the USAFE for transference to the Netherlands. Its new home base would be Soesterberg AB. The first group of American airmen, comprised quartermasters and air traffic controllers, arrived at Soesterberg on 6 October 1954. The squadron shared Soesterberg with a component of the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The squadron named the American portion of the installation: Camp New Amsterdam.

In September 1955, the designation of the 512th was transferred to RAF Bentwaters in England. Its aircraft, personnel and equipment stayed in the Netherlands and made up the newly activated 32d Fighter Day Squadron. The squadron designation was chosen by the USAF in light of the World War II ties by the squadron to the defense of Dutch possessions in the Caribbean, giving the unit a historical link to the Netherlands. The 32d was assigned to the 36th Fighter Wing at Bitburg Air Base in West Germany, its historical parent unit at the time of its activation.

The 32 FIS had the unique position of being the only flying unit in the USAF under the direct operational control of a foreign nation, namely the Royal Netherlands Air Force. This was done to underline the mutual goodwill and trust between the United States and her NATO partners. Actually, as is the case throughout NATO, the command structure was a multi-national affair. Operationally, the 32 was directly responsible to the Sector Commander of the RNethAF, who in turn reported to the 2nd ATAF commander. A NATO study concerning allied air defenses, resulted in a recommendation to improve and bolster the Central European Area with an extra fighter squadron. As a result, the 32 FIS was assigned to the RNethAF as part of the NATO air defense system.

The 32 FIS was the only squadron within USAFE which had no pilots qualified in the F-102 when, the aircraft arrived in Europe. As a result, the Daggers were sent to Wheelus AB, Libya with the first three aircraft arriving on 12 August 1960.

There the F-102s were assigned to the 86th FIW. The transition of the squadron's twenty-two pilots began on 5 Sept 1960. Four were former F-86D pilots and eighteen were former F-100C

pilots. A total of twenty-four pilots were assigned to the 32 FIS and were brought up to alert ready status during the unit's deployment to Wheelus AB. During the transition training period, a total of 1,200 flight hours and 1,050 sorties were flown.

The transition was completed on 17 November 1960 and all aircraft were officially handed back to the 32 FIS at Wheelus AB on 18 November 1960. The first group of eight F-102As arrived back at Soesterberg AB on 17 December 1960 after a two-day flight from Wheelus AB. A second group of nine Delta Daggers landed at Soesterberg on 19 December and the remaining three arrived during January of 1961.

On 9 February 1961, the 32 FIS was declared operational and put two aircraft on five-minute alert. During this ceremony, two F-102As were scrambled for the first time from the new alert hangars, each housing two Delta Daggers. The 32 FIS operated with RNethAF Hawker Hunter F.Mk.6 aircraft of the No 325 Squadron which was also based at Soesterberg.

During October of 1962, a number of squadron aircraft deployed to Wheelus for weapons training, but the deployment was cut short (after a week and a half) due to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Once the crisis had passed, they returned to Wheelus AB on 27 April 1963. Four flights of six aircraft each spent a week undergoing weapons training and during this period the 32 claimed a new record for successful intercepts. The previous record was set by the 497th FIS during May of 1962 (a success rate of 85.12 percent). The new record, set by Red flight (led by CAPT Kenneth C. Schow) was 90.16 percent. One of the more outstanding aspects of the squadron's performance at Wheelus AB was the low percentage of intercepts lost due to pilot error. The squadron's maintenance personnel were singled out as the backbone of the operation. The radar section also had one of the lowest rates of lost intercepts due to radar failures that had ever been recorded at Wheelus. In one instance, five out of six specific aircraft had to be ready in a short period of time and four of them were in need of systems repairs. In readying these aircraft, one crew removed and replaced a radar transmitter and receiver unit and realigned the receiver in the aircraft in just twenty minutes, a job which normally requires two hours.

During early 1964, all 32 FIS aircraft were modified with the infrared detection and tracking system. This major improvement in target tracking and detection, gave the MG-10 system a much greater effectiveness at low altitudes and in an ECM environment. The use of this infrared sub-system was included in the unit's training requirements.

During January of 1966, the 32 deployed to Torrejon AB, Spain, for the first time to take advantage of the better weather conditions for training. There, training period covered 151 sorties flown by six aircraft (241 flying hours). This training cycle was repeated during March of 1967 when six F-102As flew an average often sorties per day, for a total of 190 flight hours. While the winter weather conditions at Soesterberg AB were bad, the deployments to Spain were also conducted because practice deployments were required USAF training procedures.

Another deployment was made (with six aircraft) during Autumn of 1966 to Erding Air Base,

Germany. In January of 1967, the squadron deployed six F-102s to stand alert at Erding because a Soviet MiG-17 had landed in Bavaria. While at Erding, fifteen missions were flown. Erding AB again hosted six 32 aircraft during May of 1967. This deployment was in connection with proficiency training with the 412-L semi-automatic radar system.

The 32 participated in the 1965 William Tell Meet and was the first USAFE unit to fly its own aircraft back to the continental U.S. The over water deployment started on 15 September 1965 and ended when the six F-102As arrived back home on 15 October.

The six aircraft first flew to Perrin AFB, Texas, for a two week training and check-out period. Aircraft 56-1023, -1032, -1130, and -1163 actually flew the Meet, while 56-1211 and -1244 were parked at Eglin AFB. Under the rules of the meet, the aircraft could not be changed once the competition commenced. At the end of the eight-day event, the 32 FIS won in the F-102 category with a total score of 8,782 points and took first place after a "photo-finish" against the 59th FIS. The Richard I. Bong Trophy was presented to the team leader, CAPT Erwin P. Wallaker, marking the first time an overseas entry had won.

The F-102 manual specifies that a turnaround should be completed in fifteen minutes or less. This particular turnaround started when an F-102 was scrambled with a weapons system evaluation missile (WSEM). The turnaround crew was alerted some thirty minutes before the aircraft was due to return. When the F-102 landed, it went through a cursory inspection area where a crew chief checked the aircraft for mechanical problems and armament personnel removed the WSEM and inspected the aircraft's launcher rails. The aircraft then taxied to the turnaround area. Turnaround time starts as soon as the wheel chocks were in place.

During the turnaround, six missiles and twelve 2.75 inch rockets were loaded on the aircraft. At the same time, the F-102 is refueled and the nitrogen and oxygen systems are replenished. A new drag-chute was installed, the entire hydraulic system was checked and the oil reservoirs refilled if needed. Then, when the pilot returns, a visual inspection of the entire aircraft plane was made, checking for leaks, worn tires, or any other malfunctions. The pilot then climbs into the cockpit and leaves immediately.

On 30 October 1965, F-102 56-1122 returned from overhaul by CASA in Spain in a camouflaged scheme. By the end of 1966, nine other 32 F-102s were camouflaged. The last Dagger to be repainted in camouflage was 56-1013 and it returned to Soesterberg AB on 2 February 1968.

The 32 had the lowest attrition rate of the four F-102 units within the 86th AD. The 32 lost only two aircraft in flying accidents. 56-1021 crashed on 25 September 1961 and 56-0973 crashed on 12 December 1962. 1st LT. C. Robert Henderson ejected after a missed approach. A third aircraft loss occurred on 2 August 1966, when 56-1029 burned due to a fire in one of the alert hangars. The aircraft caught fire during engine start and the aft-section was quickly engulfed in flames. The pilot, rescued by the crew chief, and the other aircraft of the scramble pair was saved. The other pair of Deuces in the other half of the alert hangar was also saved along with their servicing equipment (despite the hazards of exploding fuel and ammunition aboard the

burning aircraft). As a result of their actions during this incident, two officers and three enlisted men were presented the Airmen's Medal on 10 March 1967.

There were two other incidents involving F-102s. On 12 September 1960, TF-102A (54-1365) was damaged in a hard landing at Wheelus when the instructor-pilot misjudged the aircraft's altitude over the runway. Another mishap occurred on 13 April 1961 during a night interception of a Royal Netherlands Air Force Hunter. The aircraft collided, with the Hunter crashing while the damaged F-102 was able to make a safe landing.

The reliability of the F-102 allowed the 32 to achieve an impressive flying safety record, especially over its last three years. Between August of 1966 and July of 1969, the 32 flew 13,500 hours without an accident.

The 32 never saw combat and no kills were recorded, except for two deer that tried to cross the runway during a night landing. As a record of the "kills," the aircraft, flown by 1st LT Thomas C. See, was marked with silhouettes of two deer and named "Deer Slayer."

During June of 1969, nine pilots of the 32 completed conversion training in the F-4E Phantom at Homestead AFB. The rest of the pilots for the F-4E were newly assigned and while the pilots were training, the Daggers were flown by pilots from the Air National Guard under Operation PALACE ALERT.

On 1 July 1969 the 32 was redesignated as a Tactical Fighter Squadron and on 2 July, twelve aircraft left Soesterberg AB. On 3 July, the last nine F-102s, were ferried to the U.S. and handed over to the 132 FIS at Bangor, Maine, under project Coronet East 80.

Many members of the 32 FIS had mixed emotions when the last of the squadron's Delta Daggers left Soesterberg. The pilots appreciated the F-102's smoothness and stable flight and its excellent safety record. The maintenance crews remembered the satisfying feeling of hearing afterburners light with a "bang" and watching "their birds" lift off the runway.

The first two F-4E Phantom IIs assigned to the 32 Tactical Fighter Squadron landed at Soesterberg on 5 August 1969, ending an era.

In 1989, the Dutch government allowed USAF to upgrade its headquarters unit at Soesterberg AB from squadron to group status. The 32d Tactical Fighter Group was activated at Soesterberg on 16 November 1989 and took over functions of old 32 TFS headquarters element and support squadrons received responsibilities previously assigned to 32 TFS detachments.

1990 25 April F-15C 81-0049 suffered an engine fire while flying in a three ship formation during Exercise Elder Forest and subsequently lost all hydraulic power. Pilot Major George D. Hulsey ejected safely and was picked up by an oil-rig supply vessel. Aircraft crashed into the North Sea, 9 miles off Spurn Point, Humberside, United Kingdom

During the 1991 Gulf War, after more than forty years, the Wolfhounds saw action again. Aircrew and ground support personnel were deployed, during the Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, August 1990 until March 1991, at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. On 28 January 1991 one of the pilots killed an Iraqi MiG. After the War they continued their air activities in theatre as a part of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT from April 1991 until April 1993. Headquarters USAF replaced the 32d Fighter Group on 1 July with the 632d Air Base Squadron; its duty was to complete the closure actions.

On 19 April the group furled its colors in formal ceremonies attended by members of the Royal family and the American ambassador. The 32d Group's subordinate units were inactivated on 1 July and the group on 1 October 1994.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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