

21st FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE¹

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

¹ Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Unit yearbook. *George AFB, California, 1955*. Military Publications, Miller Publishing Co. Dallas, TX. 1955.

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
363d 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
OA-10, 1991-1993
F-100C, 1959
F-4C, 1972
F-4E, 1975
F-16A, 1981
F-16B, 1981
OA-10A, 1992
F-16, 1996

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 15 Oct 1944-11 Oct 1945
Lt Col William B. Whisonant, 12 Oct 1945
Capt Francis J. Vetort, 13 Oct 1945

1st Lt Robert W. Faas, 1 Apr 1946-Unkn
Capt Samuel H. Henton, Unkn-26 Sep 1946
Capt Louis A. Guin, 26 Sep 1946-Unkn
Maj Stephen L. Bettinger, 11 Nov 1954-Unkn
Col Roger L. Sprague, 1 Dec 1972
Lt Col William E. Whitten, 1 Mar 1973
Lt Col D. L. Wagner, 17 Apr 1975
Lt Col Paul Marsh, 2 May 1977
Lt Col Wallace L. Mekkers, 5 Jul 1979
Unkn, C. 1980-11 Nov 1987
Lt Col Dick E. Willis, 12 Nov 1987
Lt Col Mark D. Gilson, 26 Jul 1989
Lt Col David M. Mclaughlin, 9 Nov 1990-28 Jun 1991
Lt Col Bobby G. Smith, 1 Nov 1991
Lt Col John A. Neubauer, 1 Oct-31 Dec 1993
Lt Col James R. Mitchell, 8 Aug 1996
Lt Col Dean A. Profitt Iii, 2 Apr 1998
Lt Col Walter E. Grace Iii, 18 Jun 1999
Lt Col Mark J. Warner, 19 Dec 2000
Lt Col Walter G. Farrar Iii, 18 Jul 2002
Lt Col Christopher Roeder, 4 Dec 2003
Lt Col Thomas G. Abbot, 8 Jun 2005
Lt Col Dennis J. Malfer, 28 Apr 2006
Lt Col James G. Sturgeon, 20 Sep 2007
Lt Col William D. Bowman, 15 June 2009
Lt Col Sean C. Routier, 24 June 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

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

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

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
1 Jul 2008-30 June 2009
1 Jul 2009-30 Jun 2010
1 Jul 2010-30 Jun 2011

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)



On a disc Sable, two playing cards totaling the number twenty one, a king of spades tilted to dexter and a ace of hearts tilted to sinister all Proper, emitting from behind the king a contrail arcing below to base and terminating in a delta, point to sinister Gules. Attached above the disc a Black scroll edged with a narrow Red border and inscribed "GAMBLERS" in Red letters. Attached below the disc a Black scroll edged with a narrow Red border and inscribed "21 ST FIGHTER SQUADRON" in Red 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 emblem purposed for the unit is deeply rooted in the traditions and the history of the Taiwanese people. The Unit has been operating in defense of the people since 1934. The cards totaling 21 signify perfection and the pursuit of victory in any endeavor. Specifically, the king of spades representing the Taiwanese people, the ace of hearts, the heart of a nation, and the arrow absolute integrity. (Approved, 18 Mar 2008)

MOTTO

Panthers
Gamblers

OPERATIONS

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.

Combat in western Pacific Ocean, 20 May-14 Aug 1945.

Trained for "wild weasel" radar detection and suppression missions, 1972-1981.

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.

Trained for forward air control missions, Nov 1991-1993.

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, P-47 and eventually the P-51. 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 and P-51. 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.

Since Aug 1996, trained F-16 crews.

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.