

163 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

365 Fighter Squadron constituted, 20 Dec 1942
Activated, 1 Jan 1943
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 163 Fighter Squadron, and allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
163 FS (SE) extended federal recognition, 11 Oct 1947
Redesignated 163 Fighter Interceptor Squadron, 1955
Redesignated 163 Tactical Fighter Squadron, Jul 1959
Redesignated 163 Fighter Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Richmond AAB, VA, 1 Jan 1943
Baltimore, MD, 28 Apr 1943
Millville AAFld, NJ, 29 May 1943
Camp Springs AAFld, MD, 3 Jul 1943
Richmond AAB, VA, 16 Aug-26 Sep 1943
Goxhill, England, 20 Oct 1943
Leiston, England, 3 Dec 1943
Raydon, England, 2 Feb 1944
High Halden, England, 13 Apr 1944
Cretteville, France, 3 Jul 1944
Pontorson, France, 14 Aug 1944

Vitry-le-Francois, France, 15 Sep 1944 (operated from St Dizier, France, 12-17 Oct 1944)
Mourmelon, France, 17 Oct 1944
Toul, France, 20 Nov 1944
Sandhofen, Germany, 7 Apr 1945
Reims, France, 23 Jun-10 Jul 1945
La Junta AAFld, CO, 4 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Fort Wayne, IN

ASSIGNMENTS

358 Fighter Group, 1 Jan 1943-7 Nov 1945

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-40, 1943
P-47, 1943
F-51
F-80, 1954
F-86, 1957
F-84, 1958
RF-84, 1962
F-84, 1964
F-100, 1971
F-4, 1979
F-16, 1991

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Offensive, Europe
Air Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Ardennes, 24 Dec 1944-2 Jan 1945

ETO, 19-20 Mar 1945

Germany, 8-25 Apr 1945

French Croix de Guerre with Palm

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 20 Dec 1943-8 May 1945.

On 10 November 1947, federal recognition was granted to the 163rd Tactical Fighter Squadron at Baer Field, Fort Wayne, Indiana, under the command of Major William R. Sefton. Flying the "Mustangs," the unit was federally activated during the Korean Conflict from 1951-1952.

By 6 November 1961 the 163d Tactical Fighter Squadron with twenty-six F-84Fs, all from Baer Field, had arrived at newly reactivated Chambley AB. The wing's C-47 and two T-33As arrived on 19 November after flying the North Atlantic route. On 1 December the Rear Detachment arrived, and all guardsman assembled for an estimated stay of ten months. The personnel at Chambley now consisted of regular air force and air guard officers; enlisted men from the regular air force, air guard, and air force reserve selective assignees; and local French employees. Selective assignees are mobilization augmentees; individuals recalled from the Air Force Reserve to fill specific jobs. All units and personnel coalesced into a smoothly working organization to make the air base operational and comfortable for the forthcoming damp winter season in France.

To accomplish the wing's primary mission of close air support, up to thirty sorties a day were flown by the squadron when weather permitted. Usually four sorties daily were scheduled against Seventh Army ground targets under the direction of Ground Forward Air Controllers (GFAC). GFAC training was a repetitive task with one fighter pilot rotating every fifteen days with Army units in West Germany. During 1962, the 163d TFS flew a total of 208 sorties for 425 hours to develop its close air support skills. Four pilots found time to attend the two-week Air Ground Operations School conducted by the Seventeenth Air Force at Ramstein Air Base.

A more interesting exercise was the exchange of four pilots and four airmen from the 163d TFS with four pilots and airmen of the West German Air Force's 32d Fighter-Bomber Wing. These fighter pilots successfully flew training missions with each other's squadrons from 3 through 15 April. This exchange greatly increased understanding of NATO air integration and terminology.

The 163d TFS flew a total of 3,625 hours during the first six months of 1962. Of these, 910 hours were actual weather instrument flying. Two gunnery exercises were conducted at Wheelus AB. It was the only place where air-to-air gunnery could be conducted since there was insufficient space for an air-to-air range in continental Europe. Approximately three hundred square miles are required for range safety. Air-to-ground gunnery, rocket firing, dive bombing, and LABS delivery was conducted at the Suippes range in France and the Siegenberg range in West Germany. All squadron pilots were qualified in conventional weapons delivery and 50 percent maintained special weapons delivery qualifications. Up to a dozen sorties were flown daily to accomplish this training. One F-84F was lost locally to engine failure, and one T-33A was lost on base in a landing accident.

These flying hours were possible because of the high quality support provided by the top-notch air-craft maintenance, armament, and electronics maintenance squadrons; in 1962, F-84F in-commission rates averaged 80 percent except for one month. In March an aircraft grounding technical order TCTO 1F-84F-802 directed replacement of all aileron control rods. This cut flying to 450 hours for the month. The wing's eight-year-old Thunderstreaks had an average total airframe time of 1,280 hours each and J-65 engine total time averaged 220 hours. All shops had greatly improved facilities and received their necessary equipment and tools since their arrival the previous November, which increased maintenance production.

On 17 July 1991, the unit entered the high-tech jet age with the arrival of the first four F-16C from Hahn Air Base, Germany. Twenty additional aircraft were received: twelve more from Hahn Air Base, seven from Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, and one from McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas. In the Fall of 1992, the 122FW completed its conversion to the F-16C/D.

In February 1993, the 122FW successfully completed its first overseas deployment with the F-16C. The exercise, "Coronet Avenger," took place in Egypt, and served as a training exercise, testing the capability of the unit to deploy and operate at an overseas location.

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Air Force A-10s have dropped some 500 bombs and air-to-ground missiles and fired 50,000 rounds in support of Operation Inherent Resolve since deploying to the Persian Gulf region in November 2014, according to a 386th Air Expeditionary Wing release. The 163rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron began its deployment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, before transitioning to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Group, under the 386th AEW, late last year, said Lt. Col. Bill Leahy, the 163rd EFS commander. Although A-10 maintainers and aircrews only had half a dozen tents and no power or communications when they first transitioned from Bagram to the freshly activated AEG, Leahy said they were flying combat operations over Iraq and Syria within a week. Squadron officials said the A-10s have flown close air support, interdiction, and combat search and rescue missions since their arrival. Airmen also are working closely with coalition partners operating from the same location, he added. CMSgt. Larry Chandler, the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron day shift chief, said he shares "facilities, parts, and knowledge" with coalition partners supporting air taskings. 2015

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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