



USAF 75TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

36TH WING HERITAGE PAMPHLET 1940-1994

Read about one of the most historic active USAF Wings



Compiled by Jeffrey Meyer, 36th Wing Historian, Mar 2022

(Prior to the 36th's assignment to Andersen AFB, Guam)

Any questions concerning this Heritage Pamphlet please call:

36th Wing Public Affairs Office, 366-2228

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ON THE COVER: Left Top — The new 36th Wing (OCP) Emblem, 2020.

Right Top — P-47D Thunderbolt, S/N 44-20230, 53d Fighter Sq., 36th Fighter Gp., during WWII.

Left Middle — 36th Tactical Fighter Wing's Skyblazers' team performs with F-100Cs, 1957-1962.

Right Middle — Official Insignia of the 75th Anniversary of the USAF!

Bottom — Aerial View of Bitburg AB, Germany, before the 36th Fighter Wing departed for Guam.

WORLD WAR II ERA



22 Dec 1939 — The history of the 36th Wing started on paper when the Headquarters U.S. Army Air Corps (AAC) constituted the **36th Pursuit Group** (Interceptor).

1 Feb 1940 — 36th Pursuit Group (36 PG) Activated, the Headquarters U.S. Army Air Corps (USAAC) activated the **36 PG (I)** at Langley Field, VA, with three pursuit squadrons, 22 PS, 23 PS, and 32 PS. Initially, the unit was equipped with P-36 *Mohawks*.



29 Jul 1941, 36th Pursuit Group P-36 *Mohawks* on display for President Roosevelt's visit to Langley Field, VA. (USAAC)

19 Jun 1940 — The Original Wing Insignia, was officially approved. It was drawn by Capt, then later, Maj Gen Charles J. Bondley, Jr. (1910-1973) while he was assigned to the 36th.

29 Jul 1941 — President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Visit: Since the 36 PG was at Langley Field, VA, at the time, the Group participated heavily in a ceremony held during President Roosevelt's visit.

14 Jan 1941 — Ponce Air Field, Puerto Rico, the Group personnel and aircraft arrived at Ponce AF (Later Losey Field), Puerto Rico with 17 P-36s, two AT-6 *Texans*, and one B-10B *Bolo* bomber where they flew anti-submarine patrols over the Caribbean.

c. May 1941 — The 36th began receiving the newest pursuit planes in the Army Air Corps' inventory the P-39 *Airacobra* and the P-40 *Warhawk*.

20 Jun 1941 — USAAC became a part of the new expanded Army Air Forces (USAAF).

7 Dec 1941 — Attack on Pearl Harbor, the group was dispersed throughout the Caribbean and expanded its anti-submarine patrols including the Panama Canal Zone.

15 May 1942 — Headquarters USAAF redesignated the 36th to the **36th Fighter Group (FG)**.

22 Jun 1943 — New P-47 Thunderbolts, the 36 FG arrived in Charleston, SC and received the new P-47s and began training in bombing and aerial gunnery at many different locations throughout the U.S. The 32 FS stayed behind in the Caribbean.

22 Jun 1943 — To replace the 32 FS, the 53d Fighter Squadron (53 FS) joined the 36 FG and would remain part of the 36th for over 50 years.

22 Mar 1944 — After a brief stay in New York the 36 FG boarded the HMT *Stirling Castle* bound for the European Theatre of Operations (ETO).

4 Apr 1944 — Arrived European Theatre of Operations (ETO). 36 FG's personnel and equipment arrived at Station 418, Kingsnorth, Kent, England after a brief stop in Liverpool, assigned to the 9th Air Force (9 AF),



The 36th Fighter Group, poses in Western France with bottles of Champagne, gifts from Lt Gen Patton after supporting him in Sep 1944.

8 May 1944 — First Combat Mission. 36 FG flew fighter sweeps over the French coast of Normandy with two P-47Cs and 37 P-47Ds. No target was designated and none attacked. The goal of the P-47 units at the time was to hit specific targets such as bridges, heavy gun emplacements, railroad supplies, and destroy the flak guns.

Battle of the Bulge, "Fightin 36th" Chronology of the Battle (So far...)

16 Dec 1944 — Nazi Panzer Divisions rolled into the Ardennes most of the Allies' Airpower was grounded & remained that way because of the weather.

23 Dec — The sun was out, a soldier commented "the war's most beautiful sunrise."

• **Joint 36th & 373rd Fighter Groups went into action:**

- P-47s attacked the Luftwaffe's air bases at Bonn-Hangelar and Wahn, where the German Airmen were just starting up their Focke-Wulf FW-190 fighter-bombers for their own missions. The 36 and 373 FGs bombed and strafed the hangars, buildings, & destroyed nine aircraft on the ground.
- At Wahn, Germany, the Luftwaffe struck back with 60 fighters, but the 36th and 373d hung on, shooting down three of the FW-190s.
- At Bonn-Hangelar, 30 FW-190s and Me-109s battled the 36th & 373d during their bombing & strafing, which made it difficult for accurate damage counts on the ground.
- At the end of the day, the Luftwaffe lost 14 fighters, while the combined 36 & 373 FGs lost seven; more importantly, two German airfields were knocked out of action, their pilots had to find alternative places to land.

24 Dec — The "Fightin 36" continued to bomb & strafe targets — 1Lt Charles J. Loring, Jr., 22d Fighter Squadron (22 FS), 36 FG, on his 55th mission, was shot down by anti-aircraft fire, captured, and spent the remaining 6-months as a prisoner of war. (See *Maj Loring*)

25-27 Dec — The weather stayed clear and air support continued. P-47s continued to strafe German troops on the roads, and 8th Air Force bombers bombed supply dumps behind the lines.

• **Gen Patton's Relief of Bastogne occurred during these dates.**

1, 2, & 5 Jan 1945 — The skies again were clear enough for Airpower to strike on German forces and supply lines.

• 1 Jan, the Luftwaffe launched Operation BODENPLATTE, against Allied airfields in France, limiting the Allies Airpower while destroying or damaging 260 planes.

• The raid came at a cost of 277 of their aircraft & 253 pilots, the Luftwaffe was never able to muster up a large offensive again.

• Hitler wrote in his personal journal, "[O]ur losses were so high that a continuation of such attacks had to be given up."

12-14 Jan — Lt Col Van H. Slayden assumed the 36 FG's command, during the last two weeks of the battle & wrote in his book:

13 Jan — He wrote, "Banged away at a German convoy with fair results [...] one of my other squadrons caught 10 Luftwaffe planes over a Rhine bridge and knocked five of them out."

14 Jan — He wrote, "[O]ne of my squadrons wiped out a Le Boche airbase in Germany [...]. We put on quite a show and left the ground covered in burning airplanes, buildings and such."

14 Jan — Hitler granted Gerd von Rundstedt permission to carry out a fairly drastic retreat in the Ardennes region.

15-22 Jan — Slayden wrote, "With the bad weather gone, the 36th Group was in action again. Our missions were simple: quickly deliver 500-pound bombs on German transportation targets roads, bridges, railroads marshaling yards or whatever TAC assigned us. St. Vith [Happy Hunting Grounds] was a vital road junction a bottleneck for most of the German forces retreating the Battle of the Bulge. The area was saturated with Allied aircraft 24-hours-a-day. A German Army was destroyed in a week. Several of my group's planes didn't come back, and most had battle damage, including mine."

23-25 Jan — St. Vith was recaptured by U.S. Forces and the last German units returned to their pre-16 Dec lines.



22 FS, 36 FG, P-47Ds at RAF Kingsnorth, England. Later, the S/N 44-19864 (Bottom Left Corner) was lost to flank during the Battle of the Bulge with pilot 1Lt Charles Loring who became a POW. (USAAF)

13 May 1944 — Capt Cortner made the 36th's first enemy kill, a Focke-Wulf 190, while escorting B-26 *Marauders* near Pontoise, France.

21 May 1944 — 36th's suffered its first casualty when Maj Debler, 53 FS, didn't return from a sweep over France.

6 Jun 1944 — D-Day Landings at Normandy, the 36th provided convoy and beachheads "Utah" and "Omaha" fighter cover, bombed and strafed in support of ground troops, and provided visual reconnaissance reports.

13 Jun-Aug 1944 — The Group endured German V-1 "Buzz Bomb" rocket attacks destined for London, but fell short on their Kingsnorth Airfield.

4 Jul 1944 — Transferred to France, some of the 36th's squadrons and Airmen began to transfer material, equipment, and aircraft to Site A-16, near Brucheville, Normandy, France.

25-31 Jul 1944 — Operation COBRA. Breakout Saint-Lô, the 36 FG's P-47s supported the First Army Corps during their breakout of Saint-Lô after they were ensnared in the hedgerows of Normandy.

1 Aug - 1 Oct 1944 — Gen George S. Patton, the 36 FG kept pace with Gen Patton's fast-moving Third Army throughout his advance deep into enemy territory. The group's efficiency and endurance earned it the nickname, the "Fightin' 36th".

25 Aug 1944 — The 36th moved again to Site A-35, near Le Mans, Sarthe, France.

1-2 Sep 1944 — First Distinguished Unit Citation, awarded for the Group's outstanding performance of duty when elements of the retreating German Army were caught near Poitiers, France, with 311 motor transports, 97 tanks, and other armor vehicles destroyed.

30 Sep 1944 — The 36th transferred again its air operations to Site A-68, Juvincourt, Reims, France.

1 Oct 1944 — The 36th received the Citation in the Order of the Day, by the Belgian Army.

22 Oct 1944 — The 36th spent the winter of 1944-1945 at their new air field, Site A-89, Le Coulet, Belgium.

Nov 1944 — 36th flew 978 sorties in 19 days in support of the 9th Army. Their P-47s destroyed 36 locomotives, 46 railcars, 38 motor transports, 53 bldgs., 22 gun emplacements, 2 ammo dumps, and a hangar.

10 Mar 1945 — First Landing in Germany. Maj LaRoque, 36 FG, landed a "Bubble Top" P-47N at Aachen, Germany (Site Y-46). It was the first U.S. aircraft to voluntarily land in Germany since c.1940. Sadly, Maj LaRoque was killed just 10 days later.

30 Mar 1945 — The 36th moved again 20 days later, Site Y-62, near Koblenz, Germany.

12 April 1945.— Second Distinguished Unit Citation, awarded for the Group's extra-ordinary heroism in action against the enemy when their P-47s destroyed 73 aircraft and damaged 19 on the ground near Leipzig.

30 Apr 1945 — The Fightin' 36th arrived at Site R-12, Rothwessen, Kassel, Germany, their final air field, before the war's end.

8 May 1945 — Victory in Europe (V-E Day). WWII was over in Europe exactly one year after the 36th's first combat mission! In that time the group flew 1,060 missions, 6,947 sorties, and moved airfields eight times. The Fightin' 36 suffered 85 casualties: 48 missing in action (MIA), 25 killed in action (KIA), and 12 prisoners of war (POW). In addition, the 36th laid claim to a great deal of battle damage including: 42 aircraft destroyed in the air, 250 aircraft destroyed on the ground, 262 armored vehicles, 420 locomotives, 2,868 railcars, 4,882 motor transports, 848 buildings, 309 gun emplacements, and 129 vessels.



Mar 1944, 53d FS's pilots, 30% of the 33 Airmen in this photo would be KIA, MIA, or POWs by WWII's end. (American Air Museum, Britain)

"Lest we forget..." - Rudyard Kipling



**MEMBERS OF THE 36th FIGHTER GROUP
KILLED IN ACTION
DURING WORLD WAR TWO**

22nd SQUADRON
Bell, Joseph X.
Bergeron, George O.
Browne, Cyril G. Jr.
Church, John M.
Conner, J.H.
Davis, Newton B., Jr.
Fazekas, F.
Gallo, John
Holland, William D.
Horrigan, Richard W.
Jarrell, Robert S.
Keim, Othniel A.
Nibley, Emmett D.
Rolland, Paul O.
Scherer, Fred M.
Sonsini, Frank P.
Vollenweider, Tom
Wright, L., Jr.

23rd SQUADRON
Arie Nic O.
Boyle, J.J.
Cavanaugh, Thornton J
Cole, James (Mose)
Cole, Samuel P.
Chaufy, Paul
Cracknell, Christian W.
Dixon, James W.
Bogie, Ivan R.
Dolson, Donn W.
Drew, Richard
Eastman, Ralph T., Jr.
Fring, Leo
Helden, Marvin
Klein, Robert
Mann, Ralph C.
Miles, Albert E.
Nicols, James E.
Pierce, Warren F.
Robinson, Frank M.
Smollen, John L.
Teegarden, John M.
Walker, Ernest L.
Wyand, John R.
Williamson, Herbert A.
Zieske, Vernon E.

53rd SQUADRON
Bathurst, Verlan E.
Beltran, W.
Branner, Shelton
Bretana, Manual
Brunner
Carr, Herbert M., Jr.
Carr, Robert S.
Combs
Copeland
Davison, Denver B.
Deabler, Richard T.
Dewey, William B.
Dimmocks, Charles A.
England, George T. L.
Filippo, Guido
Galar
Gaston, Ernest B.
Gilbert, S.H.
Groh
Haley
Hamlin, Gilbert S.
Helmes, John W.
Jugans
Kerrigan
Kind
Lane, Roger T.
LaRoque, Richard W.
Layden
Lee, Samuel C.
Lewis
McVane
Metayer, Robert A.
Mulholland, Daniel E.
Padgett, Walter F.
Reiner, Herbert H.
Robinson, Giulick, Jr.
Skeels, Frederick D.
Smith, Leonard R.
Spicer
Utrich, Chester G.
Wavra, Joseph W.
Woodside, L.P.

Loring, Charles J.
Killed in Korea



Maj Charles J. Loring, Jr. — Korean War, Medal of Honor 22 Nov 1952. Maj Loring's F-80 *Shooting Star* was hit repeatedly by ground fire during his dive while attacking enemy gun positions. Instead of withdrawing, Maj Loring aimed his aircraft directly at the gun positions and crashed into them. His selfless and heroic action completely destroyed the enemy gun emplacement and eliminated a dangerous threat to U.N. ground forces. Maj Loring was posthumously presented the Medal of Honor for his sacrifice.



27 May 1944 — 1Lt Frank A. Fazekas (U.S. Army Air Forces), was a pilot assigned to the 22 FS, 36 FG, was returning to England from a mission over northern France when his P-47 *Thunderbolt* fighter came under enemy fire. The aircraft crashed in a field north of the French village of Buyssechre. His remains were not recovered and the U.S. Army reported him deceased. On 7 Aug 2017, 1Lt Fazekas' remains were accounted for by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery, 28 March 2018.



19 April 1945 — 1Lt Richard W. Horrigan (U.S. Army Air Forces), was a pilot assigned to the 22 FS, 36 FG, 9 AF, serving in Germany. He was a part of an armed reconnaissance mission to the Alt Lönnewitz Airfield on this day, piloting a P-47D *Thunderbolt*, S/N 42-25956. He crashed while strafing enemy planes parked at the airfield, likely due to anti-aircraft fire. Horrigan's wingman witnessed the crash, but because the airfield was behind enemy lines, Horrigan could not be recovered. On 19 Aug 2021, 1Lt Horrigan's remains were accounted for by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). He will be laid to rest, alongside his wife, with full military honors in his hometown, Chester, WV, summer 2022.

COLD WAR

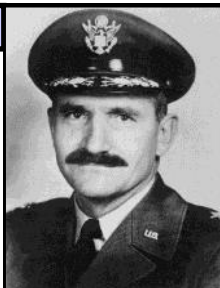
15 Feb 1946 — 36th Fighter Group (36 FG), less personnel and equipment, departed Rothwessen, Kassel, Germany to Bolling Field, Washington, D.C.

21 Mar 1946 — 36th moved again to Peterson Field, CO, less personnel and equipment.

9 Sep 1946 — The group was reassigned again to Howard Field, Canal Zone, Panama. This time with personnel and P-47 *Thunderbolts*.

13 Oct 1947 — **SHOOTING STARS**. The “Jet Age” arrived when the 36 FG began to convert to F-80 *Shooting Stars*.

2 Jul 1948 — **BERLIN AIRLIFT**. Increased tensions in Europe caused by the Soviet Union’s Berlin Blockade; the **36th Fighter Wing** (36 FW) activated at Howard Field, Panama, under the command of Col Henry Spicer who also was 36 FG/CC at the time.



Maj Gen Henry Spicer was the first 36th Wing Commander. Well known for his WWII leadership in a German POW Camp.



P-80B *Shooting Star*, S/N 45-8612, 22 FS, 36 FW, Fürstenfeldbruck, Germany, 1949. On display at Pima Air & Space Museum! (Wikipedia)

15 Jul 1948 — **Return to Europe**. The 36 FW assembled aboard the escort carrier USS *Sicily* (CVE-118) for the first leg of their trip across the Atlantic Ocean to USAFE’s 12th Air Force (12 AF).

7 Aug 1948 — All of the aircraft, pilots, most of the maintenance personnel, and equipment arrived in Glasgow, Scotland. The aircraft were towed from the docks to RAF Renfrew where they were readied for flight to the 36 FW’s new home at Fürstenfeldbruck “Fursty”, Germany.

13 Aug 1948 — Ferry flights began and all 82 F-80s were in place at “Fursty” by **20 Aug**. The wing became the first US all jet fighter-equipped unit assigned in Europe.

9 Jun 1949 — USAF’s first official Trans-Atlantic jet ferry flight concluded when 11 F-80s and four T-33s arrived at Fursty.

20 Jan 1950 — **THUNDERJETS**. The Wing redesignated as the **36th Fighter-Bomber Wing (36 FBW)** and received the new F-84 *Thunderjets*. The first in USAFE.

1 Mar 1951 — Brig Gen Robert Lee Scott, Jr. became the 36 FBW/CC. A pilot for the WWII famous 23d Fighter Group “Flying Tigers” in China and wrote the book “God is My Co-Pilot.”



F-84E *Thunderjet*, S/N 49-2155, is an actual 22 FBS, 36 FBW, on display at the Yanks Air Museum, Chino CA!



11 Aug 1951 — The Wing provided 44 aircraft for a static display & a SKY-BLAZER demonstration to future president Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower.

24 Jul 1952 — 53d Fighter-Bomber Squadron (53 FBS) began flying operations at the newly constructed Bitburg, AB, Germany the future home of the 36th.

17 Nov 1952 — **New Home, Bitburg Air Base**. The 36th completed their move to where it would stay until 1994. On 8 May 1953, the dedication ceremonies were held to officially open the base.

10 Mar 1953 — **International Incident!** Two 53 FBS’s F-84Gs were scrambled from Fursty to intercept two unidentified aircraft near the Czechoslovakian border. One of the Czechoslovakian MiG-15s opened fire and damaged one of the F-84Gs enough for the pilot to bail out and the aircraft crashed. Pilot survived the crash, but it was front page headlines around the world for a few days afterward.

1 Aug 1953 — **SABRE**. The F-86 *Sabre* arrived at Bitburg to replace the F-84s. The first in Europe.

20 Mar 1954 — **MATADOR & MACE**. The first overseas USAF missile deployment was the 1st Pilotless Bomber Squadron (1 PBS) equipped with the BM-1 *Matador* missile at 36th Fighter-Bomber Wing. The MCM-13 *Mace* Missile, followed the *Matador* at Bitburg AB, W. Germany, 1962-69.

8 Aug 1954 — The Wing redesignated as the **36th Fighter-Day Wing** (36 FDW) comprised of the 22nd, 23rd, and 53d Fighter-Day Squadrons.



53d Fighter Day Squadron’s F-86F *Sabrejet*.



Members of the 22 FDS, 36 FDW’s 1957 Gunnery Team included future astronauts Capt Edwin E. “Buzz” Aldrin Jr. & 1Lt Edward H. White, standing from left to right standing. (36 TFW History)



"Eifel Parrot" the 36 TFW/CC's F-100C #999 in the 22 TFS area at Bitburg, circa 1958. The 22d maintained this aircraft for the 36 TFW. (Courtesy of Gary Schulz)



F-105 Thunderchief takes off from Bitburg.

11 Jan 1955 — Wing Commander Killed. Col Roy R. Brischetto was killed when his F-86 crashed on takeoff from Bitburg AB.

13 Mar 1956 — SUPER SABRES. The 36th became the first wing in USAFE outfitted with the supersonic F-100.

c.1956 - 1958 — Astronauts. Two future famous NASA astronauts were assigned to the 36th. The 22d FDS's Flight Commander Col Edwin Buzz Aldrin, famously the second man to walk on the moon, 20 Jul 69. Lt Col Edward H. White, II, who was the first American to walk in space on 3 Jun 65. Sadly, he was killed in the Apollo 1 accident at Cape Canaveral, 27 Jan 67.

12 Feb 1957 — The 525th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (525 FIS) arrived as a tenant unit, began flying operations at Bitburg originally equipped with the F-86H's and converted to the F-102A *Delta Dagger* in 1959.

8 Jul 1958 — Redesignation as the **36th Tactical Fighter Wing (36 TFW)**.

1 Aug 1958 — The 461 TFS inactivated at Landstuhl AB, Germany.

15 Nov 1959 — The 36th was reassigned to the 17 AF.

13 May 1961 — THUNDERCHIEFS. First F-105 *Thunderchiefs* "Thud" in Europe were assigned to the 36th.

20 Mar 1966 — PHANTOM II. F-4C/D *Phantom IIs* began to arrive to replace the F-105s.

Jul-Nov 1968 — The 36th moved all flying operations to nearby Spangdahlem AB during Operation GULLY JUMP.



This F-4C *Phantom II*, S/N 64-0933, was one of the first F-4s in USAFE. (Courtesy of Gary Schulz)

1 Nov 1968 — The 525 FIS, still flying F-102s, were assigned directly to the 36th instead of being a tenant command.

1 Apr 1969 — DESTROYERS. A shift in the capabilities occurred when the 39th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron (39 TEWS) activated at Bitburg. The unit was equipped with RB-66C *Destroyers*, "BV" tail code.

30 Apr 1969 — The 71st Tactical Missile Squadron deactivated with its MCM-13 *Mace* Missiles marking the end of missile operations at Bitburg.

c. Jul 1969 — The 49 TFW transferred to Holloman AFB, NM, from Spangdahlem AB, Germany. This left the 36th in control of both Spangdahlem and Bitburg. The 36th would remain in control until 31 Dec 1971, when the 52 TFW activated. The 23 TFS was reassigned from the 36th to the 52 TFW, leaving the 36th with three squadrons, the 22 and 53 TFS, plus the newly assigned 525 FIS.

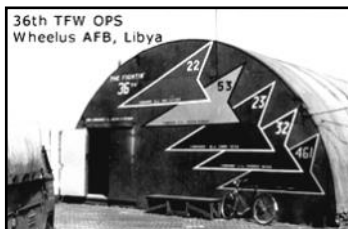
1 Oct 1969 — The 525 FIS redesignated as the 525th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) equipped with F-4E *Phantom II* fighters.

30 Sep 1973 — All three 36 TFW's flying squadrons completed the transition to F-4Es.

27 Apr 1977 - F-15A/Bs (See Page 9)



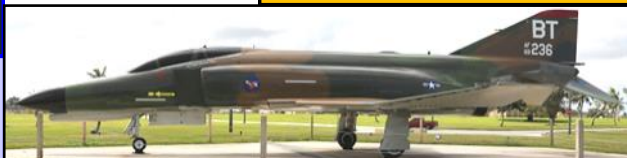
May 1969 - Sep 1970 — Capt Marcelite Harris (Left), became the first woman Maintenance Officer in the USAF while assigned to the 36 TFW. She would go on to blaze many trails for women in the Air Force, including becoming the first Black Female General (Right).



Five Fighter Squadrons! Joining the 22, 23, & 53 FDSs: On **8 Sep 1955**, the 32d FDS, Landstuhl AB, Germany. Then **8 Feb 1956**, the 461st FDS, Hahn AB, Germany. Wheelus AB, Tripoli, Libya was a fighter training base for USAFE. (Schulz)



c.1966, F-102A *Delta Dagers*, on the ramp. 525 FIS "Bulldogs" were a tenant unit on Bitburg AB, Germany until 1968. (USAF)



Andersen AFB, Guam, 2017. F-4E *Phantom II*, S/N 71-1392, painted as heritage 36th Wing Flagship S/N 69-0236, 22 TFS, 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, 1973-1977.

SKYBLAZERS



Emblem 1949-53



Emblem
1957-1962

Most Airmen do not know the 36th Wing was famous in Europe for the **SKYBLAZERS** aerial demonstration team. They were basically U.S. ambassadors during the Cold War in Europe as the "Red Curtain" of the Soviet Union was taken over the Eastern (Block) European Countries and influencing the others.

17 Sep 1948 — The 22d Fighter Squadron (FS), 36th Fighter Wing (FW), **SKYBLAZERS** flew their first unofficial performance at Fürstentfeldbruck AB, Germany, marking the one year Anniversary of the USAF.

Original Team — **Lead:** Maj Harry K. Evans, **Left/Right Wingmen:** Identical twins Lts C. A. "Bill" & Charles C. "Buck" Pattillo, **4th Slot:** Lt. Lawrence D. Damewood, & **Spare** John P. "Obie" O'Brien.



1 Oct 1949 — **SKYBLAZERS** performed their first official show at Gutersloh Royal Air Base., flying F-80 *Shooting Stars*.

20 Jan 1950 — 36th Fighter-Bomber Wing's (FBW) **SKYBLAZERS** transited to the new F-84 *Thunderjets*.

21 May 1952 — Capt O'Brien, the original spare pilot of the **SKYBLAZERS** team was killed in an aircraft accident near London.

30 Aug 1952 — The original **SKYBLAZERS** Team disbanded when the 36 FBW moved to

Bitburg AB, Germany. By that time the team performed 260 demonstrations, in 12 countries, with over 10 million people in attendance!

The Pattillo Twins — Went on to perform with the original **THUNDERBIRDS** Team 1953. Lt Gen "Buck" Pattillo, returned to Bitburg AB as the 36 TFW/CC, 12 May 1967–26 Mar 1968, finished career as the PACAF/VC, 1975–1979.

Jul 1952 — **SKYBLAZERS** were assigned to the 86th FBW, Neubiberg AB, Germany, who flew F-84Es.

Oct 1953 — Skyblazers were reassigned to the 48th FBW, Chaumont AB, France, flew F-84Gs.

May 1954 — The 48th transited to specially painted F-86F *Sabres*.

29 Sep 1956 — The **SKYBLAZERS** returned to the 36 Fighter-Day Wing, Bitburg, AB. The team was lead by future General, Capt Wilbur L. Cheech. The first leader of the **THUNDERBIRDS**. They flew the new F-100Cs until the 1962 disbandment, even though the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) upgraded to the F-105 *Thunderchiefs* "Thuds" in early 1961.

12 Jan 1962 — **SKYBLAZERS** disbanded as USAFE's aerial demonstration team for the final time. The 36th remembered Skyblazers by the naming the Bitburg Recreation Center "Skyblazer" and the base newspaper was named the "Skyblazer" c. 1950—1994.

Sources:

Aerobatic Teams: <https://aerobaticteams.net/en/teams/i162/Skyblazers.html>

F-100.Org: <https://www.f-100.org/hun114.shtml>

Skyways Magazine, 1 Jan 1952.

Biographies: Gen(s) Creech & Pattillo Brothers. 36th Wing Histories



Skyblazers in 1957, known as the "Creech Years".



U.S. Ambassador to Denmark, Mrs. E. Andersen, greeted Col Scott [36 FBW/CC] and **SKYBLAZERS** in Copenhagen. Men are (left to right) Capt Buck and Bill Pattillo, Damewood, Evans, O'Brien. (*Skyways Magazine*)



5 May 1985 — President Ronald Reagan & First Lady Nancy board Air Force One at Bitburg AB. It was during a controversial visit to the Bitburg Cemetery. 36 TFW's Airmen heavily supported this Stopover. (*Stars & Stripes*)

Oct 1980-Dec 1981 — The 36th transitioned to the newer F-15C to D model *Eagles*.

In 1981— The 36th became the first USAFE unit to deploy to Nellis AFB, NV, to participate in Exercise RED FLAG.

1 Sep 1986 — The 36 TFW assumed control and responsibility for the operation of the old French Caserne located next to the base and renamed it the Bitburg Caserne. Construction began on Survivable Collective Personnel Shelters (SCPS).



325TH FIGHTER SQ



27 Apr 1977 — EAGLES. Arrival of the first F-15 A/B *Eagles* in Europe. The 36th was first Wing outside the continental US to fly this fighter. The 525 TFS was the first squadron to bring the F-15s to Europe.



Top Left : The first F-15 to land that day in 1977? It was F-15A S/N 76-0008 (Pictured).

Bottom Left: Now F-15A, S/N 76-0008, is displayed at March Field Air Museum, CA! Displayed since 11 May 2006, last assignment was Sheppard AFB, TX.

13 Sep 1987 — Construction began outside of the Trier Gate on a multi-million dollar complex to house the *Patriot* missile system.

1 Oct 1991 — The 36 TFW redesignated to the 36th Fighter Wing (36 FW) for a second time.



36 FW was represented in this famous formation photo of USAF fighters flying over the burning Kuwait oil wells during Operation DESERT STORM, 1991. 53 FS's flagship is the second aircraft from the top. (USAF)

Dec 1990 - Jul 1991 — GULF WAR. The 36th deployed the 53d Fighter Squadron (53 FS), additional pilots and aircraft from the 22 and 525 FSs, plus support personnel to Southwest Asia, to assist in UN operations to liberate Kuwait. The 36th Fighter Wing pilots were credited with seventeen enemy combat aircraft destroyed, of those 14 were air to air victories.



53 FS, 36 FW, F-15C *Eagle* fighter takes off on a mission during Operation DENY FLIGHT, over Bosnia and Herzegovina. (USAF)

12 Apr 1993 — Operation DENY FLIGHT. was the first NATO combat operation in its history. The enforcement of the United Nations -sanctioned no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The U.S. was one of many nations taking part in this operation. The 5th Allied Tactical Air Force controlled NATO air resources. F-15C/D *Eagles* from the 36th Fighter Wing, Bitburg AB, Germany, operated from Aviano AB, Italy, and flew some of the earliest Operation's sorties. This would be the last operation or exercise the 36 FW would take part in Europe. The 1993 BRAC decided to close historic Bitburg AB.

30 Sep 1994, 36th Fighter Wing inactivated at Bitburg AB, Germany.



36th Wing Emblem



Blazon. On a shield Or, charged with an arrowhead point to chief Gules, in chief Azure a demi-wing facing outward to dexter Argent, detailed of the third, all within a diminished bordure of the first.

Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "PREPARED TO PREVAIL" in Blue 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 red arrowhead, a deadly swift weapon of offense, is symbolic of the Wing's strategic mission. The white wing represents airpower's protection and vigilance. The proclamation "PREPARED TO PREVAIL" expresses the character of every Airman assigned to provide protection to prevail over all enemies.

Motto. "Prepared to Prevail" (*Approved 14 Aug 1979*)

Approved. Registered, 24 Aug 2020. (*36th Group, 19 Jun 1940 & 36th Wing, 17 Jun 1952*)

36th Wing Honors

Campaign Streamers. Southwest Asia: Defense of Saudi Arabia; Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Decorations. [18] AF Outstanding Unit Awards: [1] May 1956- May 1958; [2] 1 Jan- 31 Dec 1968; [3] 1 Dec 1973 - 30 Apr 1975; [4] 1 Jul 1975 - 30 Jun 1977; [5] 1 Jul 1977 - 30 Jun 1979; [6] 1 Jul 1986 - 30 Jun 1988; [7] 1 Jul 1988 - 30 Jun 1990; [8] 1 Sep 1990 - 31 Jul 1991; [9] 30 Jun 1992 - 1 Jul 1994; [10] 1 Oct 1994 - 30 Sep 1996; [11] 1 Oct 1996 - 30 Sep 1997; [12] 1 Oct 1997 - 30 Sep 1999; [13] 1 Sep 2000 - 31 Aug 2002; [14] 1 Oct 2002 - 30 Sep 2004; [15] 1 Oct 2004 - 30 Sep 2005; [16] 1 Oct 2005 - 30 Sep 2007; [17] 1 Oct 2009 - 30 Sep 2011; [18] 1 Oct 2017 - 30 Sep 2019.

Bestowed Honors. Authorized to display the following honors earned by the 36th Fighter Group prior to 2 Jul 48.

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.

Decorations. [2] Distinguished Unit Citations: France, 1 Sep 44; Germany, 12 Apr 45. Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army: 1 Oct - 17 Dec 44; 18 Dec 44 - 15 Jan 45. Belgian Fourragere. Luxembourg Croix de Guerre: [44] - 45.

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Commanders & Stations of the 36th Fighter Group during WWII

36th Pursuit Group, 1 Feb 1940

Lt Col Ned Schramm, 1 Feb 1940
 Maj Charles A. Harrington, 15 Jul 1941
 Lt Col Glenn O. Barcus, 1 Nov 1941
 Maj Richard P. Klocko, 20 Feb 1942

36th Fighter Group, 15 May 1942

Maj James B. League Jr., 18 Jul 1942
 Lt Col William L. Curry, 1 Sep 1942
 Maj Earl H. Dunham, 1 Oct 1942
 Lt Col William L. Curry, 14 Jan 1943
 Lt Col Van H. Slayden, 12 Jan 1944
 Lt Col Paul P. Douglas Jr., 5 Apr 1945
 Lt Col John L. Wright, 30 Jun 1945
 Maj Arthur W. Holderness Jr., 25 Sep 1945
 Lt Col William T. McBride, 9 Nov 1945
 Col Henry R. Spicer, 15 Oct 1946

Langley Field, VA, 1 Feb 1940
 Losey Field, Puerto Rico, 6 Jan 1941
 Morrison Field, FL, 1 Jun 1943
 Mitchel Field, NY, 4 Jun 1943
 Charleston AAB, SC, 22 Jun 1943
 Alamagordo AAB, NM, 17 Sep 1943
 Scribner AAB, NE, 26 Nov 1943
 Camp Shanks, NY, 13-23 Mar 1944
 Kingsnorth, England, 4 Apr 1944
 Brucheville, France, 4 Jul 1944
 Le Mans, France, 25 Aug 1944
 Athis, France, c. Sep 1944
 Juvincourt, France, c. 1 Oct 1944
 Le Culot, Belgium, 27 Oct 1944
 Aachen, Germany, 26 Mar 1945
 Niedermendig, Germany, c. 8 Apr 1945
 Kassel/Rothwesten, Germany, 21 Apr 1945
 Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb-9 Sep 1946
 Howard Field, Canal Zone, 15 Oct 1946

Fürstenfeldbruck AB, Ger. 1948 -53

36th Fighter Wing , 2 Jul 1948

Col Henry R. Spicer, 2 Jul 1948
 Col Malcolm N. Stewart, 13 Aug 1948
 Col John C. Crosthwaite, 16 Sep 1948
 Col Hubert Zemke, 2 Nov 1949
 Col Thomas K. Hampton, 10 Nov 1949
 Col Richard A. Legg, 3 Dec 1949

36th Fighter-Bomber Wing, 20 Jan 1950

Col Robert L. Scott Jr., 1 Mar 1951

Bitburg AB, Germany, 1953-1960

Col Thomas B. Whitehouse, 30 May 1953

Col William H. Dick, 5 Jun 1954

36th Fighter-Bomber Wing, 9 Aug 1954

Col Roy R. Brischetto, 17 Aug 1954
 Col William H. Dick, 11 Jan 1955
 Col John A. Brooks III, 7 Feb 1955
 Brig Gen Walter B. Putnam, 21 Jul 1956
36th Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Jul 1958
 Col James D. Berry, 10 Jun 1960

Bitburg AB, Germany, 1960—1994

Brig Gen Robert L. Delashaw, 18 Jul 1960
 Col John H. Buckner, c. 11 Jun 1963
 Brig Gen Gordon F. Blood, 11 Jul 1963
 Col James F. Hackler, Jr., 22 Aug 1964
 Col Benjamin B. Cassidy Jr., 6 Aug 1966
 Col Charles C. Pattillo, 12 May 1967
 Col Joseph C. Secino, 26 Mar 1968
 Col Richard G. Cross Jr., 15 May 1968
 Col Forrest L. Rauscher, 15 Jun 1969
 Brig Gen Edwin W. Robertson II, 19 Nov 69
 Col Billy F. Rogers, 8 Oct 1971
 Brig Gen Don H. Payne, 25 May 1972
 Brig Gen Frederick C. Kyler, 31 Jul 1974
 Col Perry M. Smith, 31 May 1978
 Col Harold N. Campbell, 28 Feb 1979
 Col Marcus A. Anderson, 19 Jan 1981
 Col Richard L. Craft, 12 Jul 1982
 Brig Gen Larry R. Keith, 26 Mar 1984
 Col Peter D. Robinson, 25 Jan 1985
 Col John A. Warden III, 19 Aug 1987
 Col Jeffrey G. Cliver, 22 Jan 1988
 Col John A. Judd, 4 Oct 1989
 Col Ronald E. Keys, 11 Jul 1991

Andersen AFB, Guam, 1994 -

36th Air Base Wing, 1 Oct 1994

Col Dennis R. Larsen, 1 Oct 1994
 Col John M. Deloney, 7 Aug 1995
 Col William H. Hodges, 21 Feb 1997
 Col Mark J.D. Gehri, 4 Feb 1999
 Col Bernie H. Fullenkamp, 9 Jun 2000
 Col Joseph F. Mudd, Jr., 7 Jun 2002
 Col Paul K. White, 15 Jan 2004

36th Wing, 15 Mar 2006

Col Michael R. Boera, 30 Jun 2005
 Brig Gen Douglas H. Owens, 25 Oct 2006
 Brig Gen Philip M. Ruhlman, 2 Sept 2008
 Brig Gen John W. Doucette, 25 Jun 2010
 Brig Gen Steven D. Garland, 26 Jun 2012
 Brig Gen Andrew J. Toth, 19 Jun 2014
 Brig Gen Douglas A. Cox, 06 May 2016
 Brig Gen Gentry W. Boswell, 08 Jun 2018
 Brig Gen Jeremy T. Sloane, 8 Jul 2020

*Any questions concerning this Heritage Pamphlet please call:
 36th Wing Public Affairs Office at 366-2228.*