

417th WEAPONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

417th Night Fighter Squadron constituted, 17 Feb 1943
Activated, 20 Feb 1943
Inactivated, 9 Nov 1946
Redesignated 417th Fighter Bomber Squadron, 15 Nov 1952
Activated, 1 Jan 1953
Redesignated 417th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 8 Jul 1958
Inactivated, 30 Apr 1977
Activated, 1 Oct 1978
Inactivated, 15 Sep 1987
Redesignated 417th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 15 Sep 1989
Activated, 5 Oct 1989
Redesignated 417th Fighter Squadron, 1 Nov 1991
Inactivated, 1 Dec 1993
Redesignated 417th Weapons Squadron, 11 Aug 2003
Activated, 13 Aug 2003

STATIONS

Orlando AB, FL, 20 Feb 1943
Kissimmee AAFld, FL, 5 Mar-26 Apr 1943
Ayr, Scotland, 12 May 1943
Cranfield, England, 14 May 1943 (detachments at Ayr, Scotland, 14 May-10 Jun 1943;
Uxbridge, England, 14 May-10 Jun 1943; Coltishall, England, 14 May-10 Jun 1943; Bristol,
England, 14 May-10 Jun 1943; and Scorton, England, 23 May-10 Jun 1943)
Scorton, England, 10 Jun 1943
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 8 Aug 1943 (ground echelon at Ghisonaccia, Corsica, 7 Jan-Feb 1944)
La Senia, Algeria, 10 Jan 1944 (ground echelon at Borgo, Corsica, Feb-Apr 1944)
Borgo, Corsica, c. 25 Apr-7 Sep 1944

La Vallon, France, 12 Sep 1944 (air echelon at Florennes, Belgium, 6-22 Jan 1945)
St Dizier, France, 5 Apr 1945
Giebelstadt, Germany, 24 Apr 1945
Biblis, Germany, 21 May 1945
Braunschardt, Germany, 26 Jun 1945
Kassel/Rothwesten, Germany, 9 Aug 1945
Fritzlar, Germany, 10 Apr 1946
Schweinfurt, Germany, 20 Aug-9 Nov 1946
Clovis AFB, NM, 1 Jan 1953
Hahn AB, Germany, 9 Aug 1953
Toul/Rosieres AB, France, 15 Apr 1956
Ramstein AB, Germany, 1 Dec 1959-15 Jul 1968
Mountain Home AFB, ID, 15 Jul 1968
Holloman AFB, NM, 9 Oct 1970-30 Apr 1977
Zweibrucken AB, Germany, 1 Oct 1978
Ramstein AB, Germany, 1 Nov 1978-15 Sep 1987
Tonopah Test Range, NV, 5 Oct 1989
Holloman AFB, NM, Jul 1992-1 Dec 1993
Holloman AFB, NM, 13 Aug 2003

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Hahn AB, Germany, 15 Jan-3 Apr 1969 and 11 Sep-9 Oct 197
Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, 10 May-30 Sep 1972
Hahn AB, Germany, 3 Feb-14 Mar 1973, 6 Mar-5 Apr 1974, 3 Oct-5 Nov 1975, and 24 Aug-26
Sep 1976
Nellis AFB, NV, 29 Nov-19 Dec 1975

ASSIGNMENTS

Air Defense Department, AAF School of Applied Tactics, 20 Feb 1943
VIII Fighter Command (attached to the RAF), 11 May 1943
Twelfth Air Force, 8 Aug 1943
63rd Fighter Wing, 27 Apr 1944
XII Fighter Command, 27 Sep 1944
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Oct 1944 (attached to Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force, 3 Oct 1944-
24 Mar 1945; air echelon attached to 422nd Night Fighter Squadron, 6-22 Jan 1945)
64th Fighter Wing (attached to First Tactical Air Force [Prov.]), 24 Mar 1945
XII Tactical Air Command, 17 May 1945
64th Fighter Wing, 26 Jun 1945-9 Nov 1946
50th Fighter-Bomber Group, 1 Jan 1953
50th Fighter-Bomber (later, 50th Tactical Fighter) Wing, 8 Dec 1957
Tactical Air Command, 1 Mar 1968
67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Jul 1968
49th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Nov 1970-30 Apr 1977
26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Oct 1978

86th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Nov 1981-15 Sep 1987
37th Tactical Fighter Wing, 5 Oct 1989
37th Operations Group, 1 Nov 1991
49th Operations Group, 8 Jul 1992-1 Dec 1993
USAF Weapons School, 13 Aug 2003

ATTACHMENTS

2689th Air Defense Region [Prov.], Northwest African Coastal Air Force, 9 Aug 1943
337th Wing, RAF, 3 Jan 1944
All Weather Group [Prov.], 64th Fighter Wing, 15 Aug-9 Nov 1946
50th Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Jan-3 Apr 1969 and 11 Sep-9 Oct 1970

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-70, 1943
Beaufighter, 1943-1945
Beaufighter VI
Beaufighter VII
P-61, 1945-1946
F-51, 1953
F-86, 1953-1958
F-100, 1958-1966
F-4, 1967-1977
F-4, 1978
F-117, 1989-1993
T-38, 1989-1992
F-86H
F-100D
F-100F
P-61B

COMMANDERS

None (not manned), 20 Feb-5 Mar 1943
Cpt Joseph T. Ehlinger, 6 Mar 1943
Cpt William A. Larsen, 25 Jun 1944
Maj C. Richard McCray, 19 Apr 1945
Cpt Theodore A. Deakyne, 30 Sep 1945
Maj John H. Konosky, 15 May 1946-unkn
Maj Herbert R. Mann, 1 Jan 1953
LTC Joseph T. Ehlinger, 19 Dec 1953
LTC Chester L. Van Etten, 15 Jul 1954
LTC Charles E. Yeager, 2 May 1955
Maj Harry H. Herrmann, c. Jul 1957
LTC Thomas E. Stewart, 1958
LTC Forrest L. Rauscher, 10 Jan 1962

LTC Frank C. Buzze, Jun 1964
LTC Raplee Y. McBurney, 15 Jun 1965
LTC Tony M. Greget, 14 Jun 1966
LTC Robert D. Carter, 24 Jun 1967
LTC Richard F. Gibbs, by Jun 1969
LTC Richard J. Meechan, 16 Nov 1970
LTC Durward K. Priester, 7 Jun 1972
LTC Paul E. Raudenbush, 8 May 1974
LTC Robin M. Kozelka, 5 Jan 1976
LTC Ross L. Meyer, 6 Jul 1976-30 Apr 1977
LTC Richard C. Fairlamb, 1 Oct 1978
None (not manned), Nov 1978-15 Sep 1987
LTC Keat Griggers, 5 Oct 1989
LTC Robert J. Maher, 23 Mar 1990
LTC Barry E. Horne, 10 May 1991
LTC John S. Farnham, 11 Jun 1992
LTC James R. Phillips Jr., 24 Jun-1 Dec 1993

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Rome-Arno
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Vietnam

Vietnam Ceasefire

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Southern France, 28 Dec 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with the Combat "V" Device
5 May-6 Oct 1972

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1971-15 Apr 1972

16 Mar 1990-15 Mar 1992

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

7 May-24 Aug 1972

EMBLEM



417th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron emblem: The "Ghost" is identical to the "Ghost" in the historical squadron emblem, with the exception of the mask (for "BANDITS"), and suggests an apparition or hard to see being and represents the element of surprise. The black stylized aircraft is representative of the unit's Stealth Fighter mission. The elongated weapons suggest the pin-point accuracy and perfection of the F-117A's discretionary weapons. The descending aircraft (attack position) signifies unit readiness and determination. The moon, cloud and night environment depict the squadron's primary mission to teach pilots how to employ the ideally suited Stealth Fighter at night. The mountains represent the total environment the 417 TFTS operates in. (Approved, 24 May 1990)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

The Bandits

OPERATIONS

The Air Force Chief of Staff directed the creation of the F-117 Division of the Weapons School in May of 2002. The initial cadre class began in January of 2003, and the validation class began their training in July of 2003.

On 13 August 2003, the F-117 Division was re-designated the 417th Weapons Squadron, which was originally activated as the 417th Night Fighter Squadron in 1943. During World War II, the squadron saw action in the European theater, flying both the British BEAUFIGHTER and the P-61 BLACK WIDOW. From 1953 to 1966, the squadron saw many activations and re-designations as it served at various European bases flying the F-51, F-86 and F-100. In 1966 the unit transitioned to the F-4 and accomplished two combat deployments during the Vietnam War.

The 417th continued to fly the F-4 until the squadron was again deactivated in 1977. The unit reactivated in 1989 as the 417th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, 37th Tactical Fighter Wing at Tonopah Test Range in Nevada, responsible for the replacement training of new F-117A pilots. The squadron moved from Tonopah to Holloman AFB, NM in 1992, and was deactivated in 1994 when the squadron's people and mission were transferred to the 7th Fighter Squadron. The squadron's first F-117 graduates are scheduled to return to their units in December 2003

The history of the 417th began 29 years ago in 1943 when the unit was activated at Orlando AFB, FL, on 20 Feb. One of the first night-fighter squadrons to be formed in the Air Force, the 417th adopted the nick-name the RED DORK a take-off on the French word "DORQUE," meaning ghost. The squadron emblem now in use depicts a ghost riding a rocket.

Less than three months after the unit's activation in Florida the squadron moved to Cranfield, England where it trained at the RAF station there, flying the British Bristol Beaufighter. After an expedited period of training the 417th moved into combat, serving in Corsica, Algeria and later Tunisia.

Following the cessation of hostilities at the end of WWII 417th non-combat activities consisted principally of routine ground and flying training, administrative flights and the study and testing of German aircraft. The squadron was inactivated at Fritzlar AB, Germany on 9 Nov 1946 and again reactivated on 1 Jan 1953 at Clovis Air Force Base, NM. It was then assigned to the 50th Group and the 50th FBW. In the summer of 1953 the 417th along with the 50th Group and the 50th Wing transferred from Clovis Air Force Base to Hahn Air Base, Germany, where they became part of the Twelfth Air Force, United States Air Forces in Europe.

On 15 Jul 1968 the 417th returned to the United States. The F4D Phantoms of the 417th deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany to Mountain Home AFB, ID. At that time, it was the

longest non-stop redeployment of Phantom aircraft. While at Mountain Home AFB the 417th was assigned to the 67th TRW.

In Sep of 1970, 417th aircraft deployed from Mountain Home AFB to Hahn AB, Germany, to participate in Crested Cap II, a NATO exercise. Completing the exercise, 417th aircraft and crews departed Hahn AB for Holloman AFB, NM, to become a part of the 49th TFW.

On 20 February 1943, the 417th Night Fighter Squadron activated at Orlando AB, Florida. Less than a month later on 5 March 1943, the unit moved to Kissimmee Airfield, Florida, where it received its personnel and a commanding officer to begin training in the P-70, a night version of the twin-engine A-20 aircraft. Besides routine transition training in the night fighter, the pilots also complete calibration, instrument, navigation flights, and numerous target missions in this period. After arriving in England in May 1943, the 417th trained in the British Beaufighter aircraft. In August 1943, the squadron deployed to North Africa, where it engaged in harbor patrol, convoy patrol, and defensive fighter sweeps.

In April 1944, the 417th transferred to Corsica and resumed patrol activities. In August 1944, the unit supported the Allied invasion of southern France before taking up duty to fly patrol, intruder, and interceptor missions. During March and April 1945, the 417th converted from the Beaufighter to the P-61 Black Widow aircraft. Its last major combat operations in the first week of May consisted of nightly patrols and intruder missions against enemy aircraft attempting to harass Seventh Army troops and their bridgeheads across the Rhine River at Ulm, Donauwörth, and Dillingen, Germany. After V-E day, the squadron became part of American occupation forces in Germany. The 417th inactivated on 9 November 1946.

In November 1952, the Air Force redesignated the unit as the 417th Fighter-Bomber squadron and activated it on 1 January 1953 at Clovis AFB, New Mexico, for training in F-51 aircraft. Soon thereafter, the squadron converted to the F-86 Sabrejet, but the transition period extended over a long period due to an acute shortage of trained people. In the Summer, the 417th transferred to Hahn AB, West Germany, to become a unit in the United States Air Forces in Europe. There, the squadron trained in air-to-ground and air-to-air gunnery at places like Furstenfeldbruck and Giebelstadt in West Germany and Wheelus AB, Libya.

During early 1958, the 417th turned in its F-86 Sabrejets, and then deployed to Wheelus AB, where it received F-100 aircraft. The unit remained in Libya for nearly 60 days where it completed transition training in the new aircraft. On 8 July 1958, the Air Force redesignated the squadron as the 417th Tactical Fighter Squadron. The unit continued normal training activities with F-100s until 1966 and F-4s through its inactivation on 30 April 1977.

In this period, the 417th returned from Europe for reassignment at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, on 15 July 68 with the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing. From there, it deployed for training at Hahn AB, West Germany 15 January to 3 April 1969 and 11 September to 9 October 1970. The return from West Germany, however, brought with it a move to Holloman AFB, New Mexico, where the 417th remained until 30 April 1977. This time included several

deployments: Takhli, RTAFB, Thailand from 10 May to 30 September 1972; Hahn AB, West Germany, from 3 February to 14 March 1973, 6 March to 5 April 1974, 3 October to 5 November 1975, and 24 August to 26 September 1976; and Nellis AFB, Nevada, 29 November to 19 December 1975. The tours in Thailand led to two honors for Vietnam service.

The 417th resumed service when it activated on 1 October 1978 at Zweibrucken AB, West Germany, as part of the 26th TRW. At that time, however, the squadron only received a few people and one F-4 aircraft. The unit transferred to Ramstein AB, West

Germany on 1 November 1978 but evidently lost its personnel and aircraft to become a paper organization. Moreover, the 417th also switched from the 26th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing to the 86 TFW on 15 November 1981, remaining a paper organization until it inactivated on 15 September 1987. The unit's 5 October 1989 redesignation as the 417th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron and activation at the Tonopah Test Range in Nevada made it responsible for the replacement training of new F-117A pilots. The 417th assumed the mission of the 4453d Test and Evaluation Squadron.

During 1968, the 417th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Hahn was redeployed to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, as part of project CRESTED CAP. That project provided for the redeployment of specified U.S. European Air Force units to the United States on a semi-permanent basis. Those units involved, however, were to remain an integral part of their respective USAFE "parent" wings, while operating under the temporary control of the CONUS wings to which they were assigned. Not long after leaving Europe, the 417th returned to Hahn in January 1969 to participate in Exercise CRESTED CAP I, the first in a series of exercises designed to test the mobility of NATO-committed fighter squadrons based in the U.S. under simulated wartime conditions. Since that time, Hahn Air Base has hosted CRESTED CAP Exercises in 1970, 1971, and 1973 - 1976 (a total of seven).

On 9 August 1953, the wing moved to Hahn Air Base, Germany and officially became part of USAFE. The three squadrons assigned to the wing were the 10th (Blue), 81st (Yellow) and the 417th (Red). The unit markings consisted of a band around the nose and two parallel bands across the fin in the appropriate squadron color, with White stars (Black on the Yellow) superimposed on the bands. The squadron badge was placed in the center of the fin between the bands.

The 50th FBW with the 10th FBS (blue trim), 81st FBS (yellow trim), and 417th FBS (red trim) was activated at Clovis AFB, NM (later Cannon AFB), in January 1953. Originally flying F-51Ds, the wing transitioned to the F-86F and in August 1953 relocated to Hahn AB in Germany. The 50th FBW started conversion to the F-86H with a number of significant accomplishments under its belt.

The wing deployed three squadrons to Wheelus AB, Libya, starting in January. The 81st FBS deployed on 10 January and the 10th and 417th FBS deployed in February. The gunnery portion

of the training was to have gone on through the summer, but was abbreviated due to commitments made by the 12th Air Force. The last F-86H returned to home base on 10 May.

Twenty-four aircraft per squadron. These Sabres were flown from Hahn AB, West Germany to Toul AB, France by 50th FBWg pilots.

55-2932 Crashed, let-down, bad weather, 2nm S of Zweibrucken AB, Germany, 7 MAY 59, 1 fatality.

55-2936 Crashed, bad landing, weather, 1nm N of Toul AB, France, 22 FEB 59, 1 fatality.

53-1427 Crashed, let-down/bad weather, 5nm W of Ulm, Germany, 6 JAN 58, no fatalities, ejected.

55-2941 Crashed, landing, bad weather, 5 nm NE of Toul AB, France, 9 AUG 59, 1 fatality.

53-1440 Crashed, final approach, weather, 7nm NE of Traben, West Germany, 16 DEC 57, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1444 Crashed, take-off, engine failure, 0.75nm NE of Toul AB, France, 21 APR 58, 1 fatality, ejected.

53-1450 Crashed, final approach, weather, 0.75nm E of Erlenbach, Germany, 6 DEC 57, no fatalities, ejected.

55-2953 Crashed, engine failure, 5nm E of Wheelus AB, Libya, 16 APR 58, no fatalities, ejected.

55-2954 Crashed, take-off engine failure, on Wheelus AB, Libya, 23 SEP 59, no fatalities.

56-3246 Crashed, 6nm NW of Toul AB, France, AUG 58, no fatalities, ejected.

56-3823 Crashed, engine failure, 6nm NW of Toul AB, France, 27 AUG 1959, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1471 Crashed, low level, bad weather, 0.1 nm SE of Oberndorf, Germany, 5 DEC 56, 1 fatality.

56-3835 Crashed, engine failure, near Wheelus AB, Libya, 13 DEC 59, no fatalities, ejected.

53-1481 Crashed, range ops-engine fire, 70nm W of Wheelus AB, Libya, 7 JUL 56, no fatalities, ejected.

56-3901 -Crashed, let-down/bad weather, 7nm S of Toul AB, France, 18 MAY 1959, 1 fatality.

53-1490 -Damaged, control loss, night take-off at Landstuhl, Germany, 26 AUG 56, no fatalities.

53-1502 Crashed, final approach, Dijon, France, March 56, no fatalities, ejected.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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

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Unit History. *History and Lineage of the F-117A Stealth Fighter; Organizations. Office of History HQ 37 TFW. Special Study HO-91-2. Dec 1991*

Unit history. *49th Tactical Fighter Wing, History in Review. 1940-1972.*