

# 1<sup>st</sup> OPERATIONS GROUP



## LINEAGE

1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group, organized, 5 May 1918  
Demobilized, 24 Dec 1918

1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group organized, 22 Aug 1919  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Group (Pursuit), 9 Mar 1921  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group, 25 Jan 1923

1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group (from 1918) reconstituted and 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group (from 1923) consolidated, 1924.

Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group, Air Corps, 8 Aug 1926  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group, 1 Sep 1936  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group (Interceptor), 6 Dec 1939  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group (Fighter), 12 Mar 1941  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group, 15 May 1942  
Inactivated, 16 Oct 1945  
Activated, 3 Jul 1946  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter-Interceptor Group, 16 Apr 1950  
Inactivated, 6 Feb 1952  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955  
Activated, 18 Aug 1955  
Discontinued, and inactivated, 1 Feb 1961  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985  
Redesignated 1<sup>st</sup> Operations Group, 1 Oct 1991  
Activated, 1 Oct 1991

## STATIONS

Toul, France, 5 May 1918  
Touquin, France, 28 Jun 1918  
Saints, France, 9 Jul 1918

Rembercourt, France, 1 Sep 1918  
Colombey-les-Belles, France, 9-24 Dec 1918  
Selfridge Field, MI, 22 Aug 1919  
Kelly Field, TX, 31 Aug 1919  
Ellington Field, TX, 1 Jul 1921  
Selfridge Field, MI, 1 Jul 1922  
San Diego NAS, CA, 9 Dec 1941  
Los Angeles, CA, 1 Feb-May 1942  
Goxhill, England, 10 Jun 1942  
Ibsley, England, 24 Aug 1942  
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 13 Nov 1942  
Nouvion, Algeria, 20 Nov 1942  
Biskra, Algeria, 14 Dec 1942  
Chateaudun-du-Rhumel, Algeria, Feb 1943  
Mateur, Tunisia, 29 Jun 1943  
Sardinia, 31 Oct 1943  
Gioia del Colle, Italy, 8 Dec 1943  
Salsola Airfield, Italy, 8 Jan 1944  
Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 8 Jan 1945  
Salsola Airfield, Italy, 21 Feb 1945  
Lesina, Italy, Mar-16 Oct 1945  
March Field (later, AFB), CA, 3 Jul 1946  
George AFB, CA, 18 Jul 1950  
Griffiss AFB, NY, 15 Aug 1950  
George AFB, CA, 4 Jun 1951  
Norton AFB, CA, 1 Dec 1951-6 Feb 1952  
Selfridge AFB, MI, 18 Aug 1955-1 Feb 1961  
Langley AFB, VA, 1 Oct 1991

## ASSIGNMENTS

Allied Expeditionary Forces, 5 May 1918  
1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Wing, 1 Army, 30 Aug-24 Dec 1918  
Unkn, 22 Aug 1919-1935  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wing, 1 Mar 1935  
6<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Wing, 16 Jan 1941  
I Bomber Command, 5 Sep 1941  
Fourth Air Force, 9 Dec 1941  
IV Interceptor Command, Jan 1942  
VIII Fighter Command, 10 Jun 1942  
6<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 16 Aug 1942  
XII Fighter Command, 14 Sep 1942  
XII Bomber Command, 24 Dec 1942  
**7<sup>th</sup> Fighter (later, 47 Bombardment) Wing, 18 Feb 1943**  
5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, May 1943  
2686<sup>th</sup> Medium Bombardment Wing (Provisional), 25 Jun 1943  
42<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Wing, 24 Aug 1943

XII Bomber Command, 1 Sep 1943  
42<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Wing, 1 Nov 1943  
5<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, Jan 1944  
306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 27 Mar 1944  
305<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing (Provisional), Sep 1944  
305<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, Jun-Oct 1945  
Twelfth Air Force, 3 Jul 1946  
1<sup>st</sup> Fighter (later, 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter-Interceptor) Wing, 15 Aug 1947-6 Feb 1952  
4708<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955  
30<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 8 Jul 1956  
1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, 18 Oct 1956-1 Feb 1961  
1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1991

### **ATTACHMENTS**

IV Interceptor Command, 22 Dec 1941-Jan 1942  
Eastern Air Defense Force, 15 Aug 1950-3 Jun 1951

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

Nieuport Model 28  
Spad  
Sopwith Camel, 1918  
Thomas-Morse Scout  
SE-5  
Spad  
Nieuport  
DeHavilland  
MB-3  
P-1  
PW-8  
P-6  
PT-3  
P-16  
PB-2  
P-35  
P-36  
P-41  
P-43  
P-38, 1941-1945  
F-80  
F-86, 1946-1952  
F-86, 1955-1960  
F-102, 1958-1960  
F-106, 1960-1961  
F-15, 1991  
EC-135, 1991-1992  
HH-3, 1993-1994

HC-130, 1993-1995  
C-21, 1993-1997  
HH-60, 1994-1995

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Bert M. Atkinson, 5 May 1918  
Maj Harold E. Hartney, 21 Aug-24 Dec 1918  
LTC Davenport Johnson, 9 Jun 19-28 Aug 19  
Maj Reed M. Chambers 28 Aug 1919  
Cpt Arthur R. Brooks, 3 May 1920  
Maj Carl A. Spaatz, 18 Feb 1921  
1LT Roy B. Mosher, Jul 1921-18 Aug 1921  
Cpt William E. Farthing, 27 Aug 1921  
Maj Carl A. Spatz, 21 Nov 1921  
Maj Thomas G. Lanphier, 6 Oct 1924  
Maj Ralph Royce, 25 Aug 1928  
LTC Charles H. Danforth, 1930  
Maj Gerald E. Brower, 15 May 1930  
Maj Adlai H. Gilkeson, 18 Jul 1932  
Maj George H. Brett, 27 Oct 1932  
LTC Frank M. Andrews, 11 Jul 1933  
Maj Ralph Royce, 4 Oct 1934  
Maj Edwin J. House, 30 Apr 1937  
Col Henry B. Clagett, 1938  
LTC Lawrence P. Hickey, 7 Jul 1938  
Maj John O. Zahn, 1 May 1942  
Col John N. Stone, 9 Jul 1942  
Col Ralph S. Garman, 7 Dec 1942  
Maj Joseph S. Peddie, 8 Sep 1943  
Col Robert B. Richard, 19 Sep 1943  
Col Arthur C. Agan Jr., 15 Nov 1944  
LTC Milton H. Ashkins, 31 Mar 1945  
LTC Charles W. Thaxton, 11 Apr 1945  
Col Milton H. Ashkins, 28 Apr 1945-unkn  
Col Bruce K. Holloway, 3 Jul 1946  
Col Gilbert L. Meyers, 20 Aug 1946  
Col Frank S. Perego, Jan 1948  
LTC Jack T. Bradley, Jul 1950  
Col Dolf E. Muehleisen, Jun 1951  
Col Walker M. Mahurin, 1951  
Cpt Robert B. Bell, Jan-Feb 1952  
Col Norman S. Orwat, 1955  
Col John D. W. Haesler, Mar 1958  
Col Edward S. Popek, 1 Jul 1960  
Col Wallace B. Frank, Sep 1960-1 Feb 1961  
Col Robert A. Corson, 1 Oct 1991

Col Michael M. Dunn, 20 Jul 1992  
Col John P. Marty, 3 Jun 1993  
Col Daniel P. Leaf, 26 May 1994  
Col William K. Davis, 30 Jun 1995  
Col Felix Dupre, 27 Oct 1995 (additional duty)  
LTC Stephen R. Brown, 25 Mar 1996 (temporary)  
Col Irving L. Halter Jr., 28 Jun 1996  
Col Herbert J. Carlisle, 12 Jun 1998  
Col John Day, Mar 2000 (temporary)  
Col Stanley Kresge, 12 May 2000  
LTC Tod D. Wolters, 17 May 2002

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War I  
Champagne-Marne  
Aisne-Marne  
Oise-Aisne  
St Mihiel  
Meuse-Argonne  
Lorraine Defensive Sector  
Champagne Defensive Sector

World War II  
Air Offensive, Europe  
Algeria-French Morocco  
Tunisia; Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Rhineland  
Central Europe  
Po Valley  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

### Distinguished Unit Citations

Italy, 25 Aug 1943

Italy, 30 Aug 1943

Ploesti, Rumania, 18 May 1944

### Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 May 1992-30 Apr 1994

1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997

1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000

1 Jun 2000-31 May 2001

### **EMBLEM**

Vert, five bendlets enhanced sable fimbriated or, as many crosses patee in bend debased three and two of the second fimbriated argent. The emblem was designed with the unit's history in mind. The green and black colors represented the colors of the Army Air Service, the five stripes signified the original five flying squadrons, and the five crosses symbolized the five major World War I campaigns credited to the Group. A crest above the shield bore the Group's Latin motto "Aut Vincere Aut Mori", translated: Conquer or Die. In 1957, the emblem was revised, as the crest was removed, and the motto placed in a scroll beneath the shield. Approved for 1<sup>st</sup> Group, 10 Feb 1924 and for 1<sup>st</sup> Wing, 22 May 1957

### **MOTTO**

MUT VINCERE AUT MORI-Conquer or Die

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

On 16 Jan 1918, Brigadier General Benjamin D. Foulois, Chief of Air Service, American expeditionary Force, ordered Major Bert M. Atkinson to organize this band of American aviators into the 1st Pursuit and Organization Center. This entity would inherit five aero squadrons: the 94th, 95th, 147th, 185th, and the Air Force's oldest fighter squadron--the 27th. On 5 May 1918 the American Expeditionary Force evolved the 1st Pursuit and Organization Center at Gencoult, France, into the first American group-level fighter organization, the 1st Pursuit Group. Major Bert Atkinson remained commander but his title became, Commander, 1st Pursuit Group.

During their combat in Europe, the pilots of the 1st Pursuit Group primarily flew Spads and Nieuport 28s. From May until the November 11th armistice, the Group recorded 1,413 aerial engagements, accumulating 202 confirmed kills on enemy aircraft, and 73 confirmed balloon victories. For its participation, the 1st received seven campaign credits. Protected friendly observation balloons and planes, and strafed enemy ground forces. Engaged in counter-air patrols in which the group's pilots destroyed numerous enemy aircraft and observation balloons.

With the exception of the period covering Aug 1919 to Jul 1921 when the group moved to Kelly and Ellington Fields in Texas, the Group was based at Selfridge where it remained until tensions in Europe erupted into World War II. The Group honed their fighter tactics that became valuable experiences for the aerial engagements of the Second World War during these inter-war years.

The Group also participated in activities ranging from air races and testing new aircraft, to delivering the mail under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt.

Reconstituted in 1924, the group trained, participated in exercises and maneuvers, put on demonstrations, took part in National Air Races, tested equipment, and experimented with tactics, using a variety of aircraft during the period 1919-1941. The only pursuit group in the Army's Air Corps for several years, it later furnished cadres for new units.

In 1942, military strategists decided that Hitler's Germany posed a greater threat than Japan, and placed first priority with the war in Europe. As a result, the newly designated 1st Fighter Group deployed to England in what was to be called the Bolero operation. During the summer of 1942, the 1st flew once again, training and occasional fighter sweeps over the skies of France. The Group received the call to move again, this time to North Africa. By 13 Nov 1942, the Group completed the move to Algeria, where they provided aerial support against German occupied territories.

On 29 Nov 1942, the 94th Fighter Squadron flew the Group's first combat sorties of World War II, strafing a German airfield and recording several aerial victories as the year came to a close, the Group's morale sagged. Few replacement parts and virtually no replacement aircraft were available; and although the Group recorded some kills, the tally against the enemy was even at best. For nearly a year, the Group moved throughout Algeria and Tunisia, flying bomber escort and providing air coverage for the ground campaign.

The 1st Fighter Group received its third Distinguished Unit Citation for action on 18 May 1944. That day's target was the oil fields at Ploesti, Romania. The fighters were scheduled to escort 700 bombers; bad weather caused many bombers to abort the mission. The fighters continued through the heavy weather in case any bombers had continued to the target. When the P-38s reached the target, 140 American bombers were under attack by 80 enemy fighters. The Group's 48 P-38s attacked the German fighters, driving them off. The pilots shot down and damaged nearly 20 enemy aircraft, with a loss of one P-38, whose pilot parachuted to safety.

During the summer of 1947, the Army Air Force issued the "Wing-Base" plan, creating a self-sufficient wing at each base. As a result, on 15 August 1947, the 1st Fighter Wing was activated at March Field, California. The 1st Fighter Group, with the 27th, 71st, and 94th Fighter Squadrons, was assigned under the Wing. In addition maintenance, supply, and support organizations fell under the Wing's control.

During the Korean War, the 1st served an air defense role while the Wing's elements split to opposite coasts. The 1st Fighter Interceptor Group Headquarters, 27th and 71st Fighter Interceptor Squadrons were assigned to the Eastern Air Defense Force, while the Wing headquarters and the 94th Fighter Interceptor Squadron served with the Western Air Defense Force. After the cease-fire, the Wing returned to a more traditional organization. With exception of the 27th, the Wing, Group, and most of its squadrons reunited at Selfridge, Michigan.

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Air Force Order of Battle  
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.