

7272nd FLYING TRAINING WING

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7272nd FLYING TRAINING WING

Following service with the 45th Fighter Day Squadron F-100C, 55-2720, is shown parked near one of the Wheelus Air Base hangers while serving with the 7272nd Flying Training Wing.

The 7272nd Fighter Training Wing was based at Wheelus Air Base, Libya, and used F-100Cs to tow targets. Its received its aircraft from the 45th Fighter Day Squadron as that unit transitioned to the F-100D.

Original markings included a tapered red flash with yellow trim that was painted on the vertical tail. The nose had a red scalloped band that was also trimmed in yellow. One aircraft in this scheme, 55-2710, had the words "Have Target, Will Tow" painted on its forward fuselage during mid-1959. Later, the 7272nd FTW badge was placed on the tail, just under the fin cap.

These red and yellow markings later gave way to dark blue bands on the nose and tail. The nose band was bordered with white, but on the vertical fin two thin, white, horizontal stripes were added

inside the wide band. Centered between these two stripes was the wing insignia. Above and below the white stripes, and in the blue on the nose, were several white horizontal flashes.

In the mid-1960s, these colorful markings gave way to standard USAF markings. The wing badge was placed high on the vertical tail, just below the fibreglass tip.

The second set of markings used by the 7272nd FTW are illustrated on F-100C, 54-1921. By the mid 1960s, only the wing insignia remained on the tail to indicate the aircraft's assignment to the 7272nd FTW.

7272nd Flying Training Wing (USAFE)

Wheelus Air Base, Libya, was one of the largest and perhaps most active of USAF bases under USAFE. Situated five miles east of Tripoli, its primary mission was the support and training of USAFE fighter bomber squadrons and the defense of Libya.

The base unit at Wheelus was the 7272nd Air Base Wing which was divided into three main groups devoted to air gunnery operations, training and support.

Training and evaluation of European based fighter and attack squadrons was the task of the 7272nd Aircraft Gunnery Group. USAFE squadrons were periodically attached to this unit for live fire gunnery, rocketery and bombing training. Widely known as the USAFE Weapons Center, the 7272nd Flying Training Wing was activated in April of 1953, with its Headquarters at Rabat, French Morocco until it moved to Wheelus Air Base in August of 1956.

For air-to-air gunnery and rocketery training, radar reflecting targets were towed by B-57Es of the 7235th Support Squadron, which also operated F-100Cs as chase aircraft for the interceptors under training. Should a fighter's radar lock on to the Tug and not the target, the order to break off was given by the chase pilot. When the B-57Es were retired from service, target towing was taken over by the F-100Cs.

The markings on the F-100s assigned to the 7235th Support Squadron consisted of a Red tapered band across the fin outlined in Yellow; the nose intake was also Red with a Yellow outline. These markings were applied from 1957 to 1960 when they were replaced by a new design. The new markings were a band around the nose and across the fin in Insignia Blue with a White arrow design on the band. The 7272nd Flying Training Wing insignia was carried on the fin.

Known Aircraft:

7235th Support Squadron — Red markings: 55-2710 and 55-2715

Insignia Blue Markings: 54-1877, 54-1921, 54-1944 and 55-2721

On 15 November, Headquarters USAFE was reconsolidated at Lindsey Air Station, Wiesbaden, Germany, and the positions of Deputy Commander USAFE ADVON at Ramstein Air Base and REAR at Lindsey Air Station were abolished. The 7100th Support Group at Wiesbaden Air Base was redesignated as the 7101st Air Base Wing and assigned directly to Headquarters USAFE. Relieved from assignment to Seventeenth Air Force and reverting to Headquarters USAFE direct control were TUSLOG in Turkey, the 316th Air Division (Defense) in Morocco, the Moroccan Liaison Office at Rabat, and the 7272d Air Base Wing (USAFE Weapons Center) at Wheelus Air Base, Libya. 1959

The 7272d Air Base Group at Wheelus AB, Libya, was redesignated and reorganized as the 7272d Flying Training Wing on 1 July. 1964

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Sources