



Fact Sheet

United States Air Force

91st Strategic Missile Wing
Minot AFB, North Dakota 58705

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5th FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR SQUADRON

Located at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., the 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron is a Tactical Air Command tenant unit. Its mission is to maintain interceptors and crews in a maximum state of readiness for protection of our borders. To accomplish this mission, the squadron flies the F-15 Eagle.

The 5th FIS, originally known as the 5th Pursuit Squadron, was activated at Selfridge Field, Mich., on Jan 16, 1941, and became part of the 52nd Pursuit Group. During the 18 months following activation, the squadron participated in numerous training exercises throughout the United States, to test its operational capabilities. Mission aircraft were the P-40 "War Hawk" and the P-39 "Air Cobra." The group and squadron were renamed the 52nd Fighter Squadron in May 1942.

On July 1, 1942, the unit sailed from New York on the HMS Duchess of Bedford and 14 days later arrived at their destination, Eglinton Royal Air Force Base, Northern Ireland. There, the aircrews began an extensive training period in British Spitfires under RAF guidance. During the Spitfire transition, the squadron adopted the "Spitten Kitten" emblem which it still retains. Eventually, the squadron moved on the Goxhill, England, to continue its training. During this time, the U.S. Army Air Corps assumed operational control of the unit.

From England, the unit moved to Maison Blane in the combat zone of North Africa and began flying regular harbor patrols and providing escort cover for both transport and bomber aircraft. The next squadron move was to Palermo, Italy, where it participated in the Sicilian Campaign. Staging out of Corsican bases, the unit fought with distinction in the Naples and Rome-Amo Campaigns.

During this period, the transition into the P-51 "Mustang" was accomplished. Use of this aircraft enabled the unit to provide maximum support during the Northern Italy offensive and also engage in long-range fighter missions over France, Germany, Rumania and other Balkan countries.

On June 20, 1944, Lt. James W. Empey became the squadron's first combat ace. The unit was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for a June 9, 1944, mission when it successfully protected bombers that struck aircraft factories, communications centers and supply lines in Germany. On Aug. 31, 1943, the unit received its second Distinguished Unit Citation for a strafing raid on Reghin Airdome, Rumania, when it destroyed a great number of fighter and transport aircraft.

The squadron returned to the United States in August 1945, and was inactivated at Drew Field, Fla., on Nov. 7, 1945.

On Nov. 9, 1946, the squadron was reactivated in Germany and designated as an all-weather fighter unit, flying P-61 "Black Widows." A few months later, the squadron was returned to the United States and located at Mitchell Field, N.Y., until October 1949 when it was relocated to McGuire AFB, N.J.

While located at McGuire AFB the squadron was renamed the 5th Fighter Interceptor Squadron on May 1, 1951. On Feb. 9, 1952, the 52nd Fighter Group was inactivated and the 4709th Air Defense Wing absorbed the support activities of the 5th FIS and supported the flying commitments of the unit which remained active. Mission aircraft at that time were the F-94 "Starfire" and the F-86 "Sabre Jet."

The 52nd Fighter Group Air Defense was reactivated by the Aerospace Defense Command on Aug. 18, 1955, thus bringing the 5th FIS to Suffolk County AFB, N.Y. In conjunction with the move, the unit received a new mission aircraft, the F-106 "Delta Dart."

In November 1965, the 5th FIS was acclaimed as the finest F-106 squadron in the Air Force. It was later named Aerospace Defense Command's Outstanding Maintenance Award winner for the period July 1967 to May 1968. The squadron maintained its excellent rating by being chosen once again as the best F-106 squadron in the Air Force from July 1968 to April 1970.

Yet another honor was registered by the squadron when it was awarded the Aerospace Defense Command "A" Award, the highest award of the command for sustained superior maintenance and operations performance for 1972.

In 1973, the unit conducted numerous deployments of men and aircraft for inter-command and inter-service tactical training, weapons systems verification and air defense alerts. Each mission was handled with outstanding results. The deployments included two trips to Tyndall AFB, Fla., one each to Nellis AFB, Nev., and Miramar Naval Air Station, Calif. These deployments entailed combat contests with dissimilar aircraft.

In 1975, the squadron was deployed to Hahn Air Base, Germany, to take part in a medium scale air exercise sponsored by Allied Forces Central Europe, representing the Aerospace Defense Command in exercise "Gold Fire '75'." This exercise was the first deployment ever of the command's fighter aircraft to Europe.

In sports endeavors, the 5th FIS excelled as well. The unit swept a majority of the years' sports and captured the Base Commander's Trophy as the best unit in the sports fields, an honor they also won in 1976.

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In 1977, the unit received its second Aerospace Defense Command 'A' award. A sad note appeared when Top, the father of the squadron's mascots, a Canadian Lynx, died early in the year. The year saw the selection of the 5th FIS to represent the Aerospace Defense Command in deployments to Miramar Naval Air Station, Calif., and Nellis AFB, Nev., for dissimilar aerial combat. The combat was with aircraft such as the F-4 'Phantom' and new F-15 'Eagle.'

In 1979, the squadron was selected from the squadrons in Aerospace Defense Tactical Air Command to represent the command in competition for the Hughes Trophy, given each year to the outstanding unit Air Force wide.

In 1980, the 5th FIS won first place among active duty F-106 squadrons at the prestigious competition, William Tell 1980. The squadron participated in Red Flag 81-2 at Nellis AFB, Nev., in January 1981. The 5th FIS also participated in the Strategic Air Command exercise Giant Voice in November and College Dart at Tyndall AFB, Fla., in August and again in December. The squadron also participated in Combat Pike in 1983 and 1984 at Tyndall AFB. They also participated in Red Flag 83-3 and 84-1 at Nellis AFB.

One of the unit's Canadian Lynx mascots died in August of 1982. He was replaced by a 14-month-old male named Bobby, who was purchased from the Boyko family of Stanton, N.D. In the summer of 1986 one of the lynx cats expanded the lynx family by giving birth to two kittens.

On Dec. 4, 1984 the squadron's first F-15 Eagle arrived and the squadron started its conversion from the F-106 Delta Dart to the F-15.