309th Fighter Squadron

Lineage.
Constituted as 309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) on 21 January 1942.
Activated on 30 January 1942.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron on 15 May 1942.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, on 20 August 1943.
Inactivated on 7 November 1945.

Activated on 20 August 1946.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron, Jet, on 15 June 1948.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 20 January 1950.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Escort Squadron on 16 July 1950.
Redesignated 309th Strategic Fighter Squadron on 20 January 1953.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 1 April 1957.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron on 1 July 1958.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron on 1 July 1982.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron on 1 October 1986.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron on 1 November 1991.¹
Inactivated on 31 December 1993.

Activated on 1 April 1994.²
Not manned 30 May 2014.³
Remanned 2 July 2014.⁴

¹ TAC SO G-12, 1 November 1991
² AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994
³ Hist of the 56 FW, 1 Oct 2013 – 30 Sep 2014 (FOUO), pp. 10-11 (Info used is not FOUO).
⁴ 56 MSG SP GS-25-14, 18 July 2014
Honors.

*Campaign Streamers.*

**World War II European-African-Middle Eastern Theater:**
- Air Offensive, Europe [1942–1944]
- Algeria-French Morocco with Arrowhead [1942]
- Tunisia [1942-1943]
- Sicily with Arrowhead [1942-1943]
- Naples-Foggia [1943-1944]
- Anzio [1944]
- Rome-Arno [1944]
- Normandy [1944]
- Northern France [1944]
- Southern France [1944]
- North Apennines [1944-1945]
- Rhineland [1944-1945]
- Central Europe [1945]
- Po Valley [1945]
- Air Combat [1941–1945]

**Vietnam:**
- Vietnam Air Offensive [1966-1967]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II [1967-1968]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III [1968]
- Vietnam Air/Ground [1968]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV [1968-1969]
- TET 69/Counteroffensive [1969]
- Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969 [1969]
- Sanctuary Counteroffensive [1970]
- Southwest Monsoon [1970]

*Decorations.*

**Distinguished Unit Citations,**
- Rumania, 21 April 1944
- Poland, 25 July 1945

**Presidential Unit Citation**
- Vietnam, 1 May-31 December 1968.

**Air Force Outstanding Unit Award**
- 1 June–16 December 1966 with Combat "V" Device
- 17 December 1966–30 April 1968 with Combat "V" Device
Decorations. (Continued)

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (Continued)

4 July 1952–16 July 1952
1 March 1962–30 November 1962
1 July 1994–30 June 1996
1 July 1996–30 June 1998
1 July 1998–30 June 2000
1 July 2001–30 June 2003
[1 July] 2003–30 June 2005
1 July 2005–30 June 2006
1 July 2006–30 June 2007
1 July 2007–30 June 2008
1 July 2008–30 June 2009
1 July 2009–30 June 2010
1 July 2010–30 June 2011
1 July 2011–30 June 2012
1 July 2012–30 June 2013
1 July 2013–30 May 2014
1 July 2015–30 June 2016
1 July 2016–30 June 2017
1 July 2017–30 June 2018
1 July 2018–30 June 2019

Special Honors.

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm,

5 AETC SO GA-18, 15 November 1996
6 AETC SO GA-12, 9 November 1998
7 AETC SO GA-9, 8 December 2000
8 AETC SO GA-55, 29 April 2004
9 AETC SO GA-0052, 22 June 2006
10 AETC SO GA-045, 8 May 2007
11 AETC SO G-054, 28 February 2008
12 AETC SO G-071, 3 April 2009
13 AETC SO G-025, 11 March 2010
14 AETC SO G-086, 9 May 2011
15 AETC SO G-171, 17 April 2012
16 AETC SO G-036, 1 March 2013
17 AETC SO G-017, 1 February 2014
18 AETC SO G-029, 8 January 2015
19 AETC SO G-022, 22 March 2017
20 AETC SO G-015, 19 Dec 2017
21 AETC SO G-057, 20 May 2019
22 AETC SO G-013, 18 Dec 2019
Squadron – 173.75 Total Aerial Victory Credits. 15 Squadron Aces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Aerial Victories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>In Sq</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt John M. Ainlay</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Samuel J. Brown</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt George T. Buck, Jr.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt Frederic J. Dorsch, Jr.</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Richard D. Faxon</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Raymond F. Harmeyer</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maj Frank A. Hill</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt George G. Loving, Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Murray D. McLaughlin</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Carl W. Payne</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Dale E. Shafer</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Robert D Thompson</td>
<td>5.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lt Col Harrison R. Thynge</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maj Victor E. Warford</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt David C. Wilhelm</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
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Stations. Baer Field, Indiana, 30 January 1942; New Orleans Air Base, Louisiana, 6 February-19 May 1942; High Ercall, England, c. 12 June 1942; Westhampnett, England, 1 August-23 October 1942; Tafaraouï, Algeria, 8 November 1942; La Senia, Algeria, 14 November 1942; Thelepte, Tunisia, 6 February 1943; Tebessa, Algeria, 17 February 1943; Youks-les-Bain,

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23 NOTE: Became an ace while in the squadron.
24 NOTE: Became an ace while in the squadron.

Aircraft.

- Curtis P-40 Warhawk: 1942
- Bell P-39 Airacobra: 1942
- Supermarine Spitfire: 1942-1943
- Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star: 1946-1947
- Republic F-84 Thunderjet: 1948-1957

**Emblem.** Originally approved on 27 November 1944; newest rendition approved on 18 July 1995.

**Blazon.** Azure blended per. pale Celeste to sinister, Donald Duck in animated anger Proper garbed in a flight jacket and P-3 crash helmet Light Blue and Argent grasping in dexter hand a board bendwise sinister with a nail in the end Proper and in sinister hand a lightning flash bendwise above his head Or, above a demi-globe issuant from base, Celeste grid lined of the first land masses Brown and below in chief a mullet of eight Argent; in dexter the constellation, Ursa Major in mullets of four White; all within a diminished bordure of the first.

Attached below the disc a White scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "309th FIGHTER SQ" in Blue letters.

**Official Motto.** None.

**Significance.** Blue and 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 disc is blended dark to light blue indicating the unit's day and night defense capabilities. The single star and constellation depict the squadron's pioneering efforts in the establishment of celestial navigation as a viable and integral method of navigation for fighter units. Donald Duck in flight gear grasping a lightning bolt and board with nail, symbolizes the lineage of the unit as a fighter squadron and its defense and striking capabilities through in-flight refueling. It also implies the squadron's participation in two historic long range ocean crossings.

**Commanders.**

**309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) [30 January 1942-15 May 1942]**

Maj [Bio 1st Lt] Harrison R. Thyng  
30 January 1942 - 15 May 1942  
[Ace][Major General]

**309th Fighter Squadron [15 May 1942-20 August 1943]**

Maj Harrison R. Thyng  
15 May 1942  
[Ace][Major General]

Maj Frank A. Hill  
12 May 1943  
[Ace]

Maj Carl W. Payne  
13 July 1943 – 20 August 1943.  
[Ace]
Commanders. (Continued)

309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine [20 August 1943-7 November 1945; 20 August 1946 – 15 June 1948]

- Maj Carl W. Payne     20 August 1943       [Ace]
- Capt Robert E. McCarthy, Jr.    14 October 1943
- Maj Garth B. Jared     9 November 1943
- Maj John M. Meader     18 April 1944
- Lt Col Victor E. Warford     22 May 1944       [Ace]
- Maj George T. Buck, Jr.    12 October 1944       [Ace]
- Maj Simon H. Johnson, Jr.    16 February 1945
- Maj Julius D. Shivers     9 May 1945-Unknown

Unknown,     20 August 1946-October 1947

309th Fighter Squadron, Jet [15 June 1948-20 January 1950]

- Lt Col Robert W. Stevens     15 June 1948

309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron [20 January 1950-16 July 1950]

- Maj Arthur D. Thomas     20 January 1950

309th Fighter-Escort Squadron [16 July 1950-20 January 1953]

- Maj William R. Young      c. 1950
- Maj Don V. Booty      April 1951
- Lt Col Charles W. Lenfest     January 1952 - 20 January 1953       [Ace][Brigadier General]

309th Strategic Fighter Squadron [20 January 1953-1 April 1957]

- Lt Col Charles W. Lenfest     20 January 1953       [Ace][Brigadier General]
- Lt Col Hayden C. Curry      June 1953
- Maj Adrian E. Drew      January 1955
- Capt David W. Williams     October 1955
- Maj Donald W. Maggert     April 1956 - 1 April 1957.

309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron [1 April 1957-1 July 1958]

- Maj Donald W. Maggert     1 April 1957
- Maj James E. Bean      11 October 1957
Commanders. (Continued)

309th Tactical Fighter Squadron [1 July 1958-1 July 1982]
- Maj Arthur H. Johnson, Jr. 1 July 1958
- Lt Col Louis R. Vogt 15 March 1959
- Maj John B. Butler 1959
- Maj Herbert L. Prevost 1960
- Lt Col Garth L. Reynolds 13 December 1961
- Maj Aubrey C. Edinburgh 1 April 1963
- Lt Col Garth L. Reynolds 9 September 1963
- Lt Col Tom L. DeGraffenried 8 June 1964-5 November 1965
- Lt Col Carlos O. Beasley 1965
- Lt Col Freddie L. Poston c. 7 January 1966
  [Lieutenant General]
- Lt Col Daniel J. Sheehan, Jr. 1 November 1967
- Lt Col David S. Renshaw 1968
- Lt Col Lawrence W. Whitford, Jr. 6 February 1969
- Lt Col Ronald A. Berdoy 26 September 1969
- Lt Col Clarence D. Glenn 24 August-c. 15 October 1970
- Lt Col Charles W. Hetherington 30 October 1970
- Lt Col Donald V. MacKellar 10 May 1972
- Lt Col Steve Braswell 10 March 1973
- Lt Col Donald A. Elliott 24 May 1974
- Lt Col Edward S. Joiner 9 September 1975
- Lt Col Ralph E. Beekman 31 December 1977
- Lt Col Michael G. Major 26 November 1979
- Lt Col Travis E. Harrell 3 April 1981 – 30 June 1982 [Brigadier General]

309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron [1 July 1982-1 October 1986]
- Lt Col Travis E. Harrell 1 July 1982 [Brigadier General]
- Lt Col Thomas R. Lanum 13 July 1982
- Lt Col William D. Ray 24 July 1984
- Lt Col David L. Haas 12 June 1986 - 1 October 1986

309th Tactical Fighter Squadron [1 October 1986-1 November 1991]
- Lt Col David L. Haas, 1 October 1986
- Lt Col Robert D. O'Dell, 7 June 1988
- Lt Col Thomas B. Poole, 29 December 1989 - 1 November 1991
309th Fighter Squadron [1 November 1991–31 December 1993; 1 April 1994-]

Lt Col Thomas B. Poole    1 November 1991
Lt Col Thomas A. Gilkey    July 1992-31 December 1993
Lt Col Charles B. Oltman    1 April 1994
Lt Col Randy S. Wenzel    13 July 1995
Lt Col William D. McConnell    31 January 1997
Lt Col Philip A. Oppenheimer    1 February 1999
Lt Col Christopher P. Bisgrove    25 February 2000
Lt Col Neal R. Carbaugh    1 October 2001
Lt Col Roy D. McMickel    19 March 2003
Lt Col Keith S. Miller    23 March 2004
Lt Col Peter F. Davey    12 May 2006
Lt Col Peter Bilodeau    23 May 2008
Lt Col Daniel T. Lasica    21 May 2010    [Brigadier General]
Lt Col Stephane Wolfgeher    24 May 2012
None (not manned)    30 May 2014-1 July 2014
Maj (later, Lt Col) William H. McKibban    2 July 2014
Maj (later, Lt Col) Kathryn K. Gaetke    24 June 2016
Lt Col James D. Smith    29 June 2018
Lt Col Matthew P. Eldredge    19 June 2020-Present.

Narrative.
Combat in European Theater of Operations (ETO) and Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO), c. 17 August 1942-3 May 1945. Combat in Southeast Asia, 20 December 1966-

On 21 January 1942, the unit was constituted as the 309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor). It activated at Baer Field, Indiana, on 30 January 1942, was assigned to the 31st Pursuit (later, 31st Fighter) Group. On 6 February 1942, the unit moved to New Orleans AB, Louisiana. During this period, the squadron trained in flew the Curtis P-40 Warhawk and Bell P-39 Airacobra. On 15 May 1942, the unit was redesignated as the 308th Fighter Squadron. Four days later, the unit left for Europe without aircraft. Around 12 June 1942, the squadron arrived at High Ercall, England. Equipped with the Supermarine Spitfire, the squadron trained in the aircraft for two months. On 1 August 1942, the unit moved to Westhampnett, England, where it began flying combat missions in the Theater of Operations (ETO) on the 17th.

On 23 October 1942, the squadron departed for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). It landed at Tafaraoui, Algeria, 8 November 1942, the first day of the Allied invasion of North Africa. On 14 November 1942, the squadron operated from La Senia, Algeria. On 6 February 1943, the squadron moved to Thelepte, Tunisia. On 17 February 1943, the unit moved to Tebessa, Algeria. Five days later, it moved to Youks-les-Bain, Algeria and four days after that to Kalaa Djerda, Tunisia. On 11 March 1943, it moved back to Thelepte, Tunisia. On 7 April 1943, the squadron moved to Djilma, Tunisia, and five days later to Le Sers, Tunisia. The North Africa Campaign ended on 13 May 1943. Four days later, the squadron moved to Korba, Tunisia. In preparation for the invasion of Sicily, on 3 July 1943, the squadron moved to an island off of Malta by the name of Gozo. The invasion began on 9 July 1943. Four days after that, the squadron moved to Ponte Olivo, Sicily, and then Agrigento, Sicily, eight days after that. On 5 August 1943, the unit moved to Termini, Sicily. The invasion ended on 17 August 1943. On 20 August 1943, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine. On 5 September 1943, two days after the Allies invaded Italy, the squadron moved to Milazzo, Sicily. Sixteen days later, the squadron moved to Montecorvino, Italy. On 14 October 1943, it moved again to Pomigliano, Italy. About this time, the squadron converted to the North American P-51 Lightning, which it flew for the rest of the war. In preparation for the Allied amphibious landings at Anzio, the squadron moved to Castel Volturno, Italy, around 14 January 1944. On 4 April 1944, the unit move to San Severo, Italy, and on 4 March 1945 to Mondolfo, Italy. On 15 July 1945, the squadron moved to Triolo, Italy. On 5 August 1945 it departed for the United States. It arrived at Drew Field, Florida, in August 1945, and inactivated on 7 November 1945. During World War II, the 309th created 15 aces and was credited with 173.75 aerial victories. For its efforts, the squadron garnered 2 Distinguished Unit Citations and 15 campaign streamers.

The 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, reactivated on 20 August 1946, flying the Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star at Giebelstadt, Germany. It was reassigned to the 31st Fighter (later, 31st Fighter-Bomber; 31 Fighter-Escort) Group. Around 30 September 1946, the squadron moved to Kitzingen, Germany. On 25 June 1947, the squadron moved to Langley Field, Virginia, and flew the North American P-51 Lightning. On 4 September 1947, the
squadron moved to Turner Field (later, Air Force Base), Georgia. In 1948, the squadron began a
yearlong transition to the Republic F-84 Thunderjet. On 15 June 1948, the unit was redesignated
as the 309th Fighter Squadron, Jet. On 20 January 1950, the squadron was redesignated as the
309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron and then the 309th Fighter-Escort Squadron on 16 July 1950.
Between 26 December 1950 and 25 July 1951, the unit deployed to Manston Royal Air Force
Station, England. On 27 July 1951, the squadron was attached to 31st Fighter-Escort Wing. On
16 June 1952, the unit was official assigned to the 31st Fighter-Escort (later, 31st Strategic
Fighter; 31st Fighter-Bomber; 31st Tactical Fighter) Wing. Four day later, the squadron
deployed at Misawa Air Base, Japan, and remained there until 16 October 1952. On 20 January
1953, the unit was redesignated as the 309th Strategic Fighter Squadron. Between 7 November
1953 and 9 February 1954, the squadron deployed at Misawa Air Base, Japan. Between
5 January and 9 February1957, the 309th deployed to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and was
attached to Alaskan Air Command. In 1957, the squadron converted to the North American
F-100 Super Sabre and was redesignated as the 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 1 April
1957. On 1 July 1958, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron.
On 15 March 1959, the squadron moved to George Air Force Base, California. From 9 July-15
November 1960, the squadron deployed at Aviano Air Base, Italy, and attached to an unknown
organization.
Between 9 October and 26 November 1961, the unit deployed at Spangdahlem Air Base,
Germany, and was attached to an unknown organization. On 1 October 1962, the squadron
moved to Homestead, Air Force Base, Florida. Between 7 July and 22 December 1962, the unit
was deployed at Kadena Air Base, Japan, and attached to 18th Tactical Fighter Wing. Between
26 September and 31 December 1963, the squadron deployed at Itazuke Air Base, Japan, was
attached to the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing. Between 5 August and 27 November 1964, the unit
deployed to Cigli Air Base, Turkey, and was attached to 7231st Combat Support Group.
Between 18 January and 24 April 1966, the 309th deployed again to Cigli Air Base, and was
attached to 7231st until 1 April 1966 when it was attached to the 41st Combat Support Group.

On 13 December 1966, it left Homestead, and three days later arrived at Tuy Hoa Air Base,
South Vietnam. In October 1970, the squadron left Tuy Hoa Air Base, and around 9 October
1970 arrived at England Air Force Base, Louisiana, and was assigned to the 4403d Fighter Wing.
In Southeast Asia, the squadron flew combat missions. During the war in Southeast Asia, the
309th earned a Presidential Unit Citation, 10 campaign streamers, and a Republic of Vietnam
Gallantry Cross with Palm. On 30 October 1970, it moved to Homestead Air Force Base,
Florida, reassigned to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, and began flying the McDonnell Douglas
F-4 Phantom II. In 1970, the squadron became a replacement training unit for undergraduate and
navigator graduates in F-4 tactical fighter aircraft. On 1 July 1982, the squadron was
redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.

During 1986, the squadron converted to the Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon and retained its
training mission. On 1 October 1986, the unit was redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter
Squadron. On 1 November 1991, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Fighter Squadron
and reassigned to the 31st Operations Group. On 24 August 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated
Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. On 23 August 1992, the squadron began operating from
Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, and was attached to the 363d Operations Group. On
1 October 1992, the move to Shaw Air Force Base was made permanent.
1992, the unit was assigned to 363d Operations Group. On 31 December 1993, the squadron inactivated.

On 1 April 1994, the squadron reactivated at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and was assigned to the 56th Operations Group. During this time, the 309th conducted qualification training for USAF student pilots and transition training for pilots in F-16 aircraft. On 30 May 2014, the squadron was unmanned and re-manned on 2 July 2014. Since re-manning, the squadron conducted qualification training for USAF and Partner Nation student pilots and transition training for pilots in F-35A aircraft.

Locally Updated on 21 Sept 2020

Locally Updated by Rick Griset