

— ★★★ 63d ★★★ —

FIGHTER SQUADRON CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

— ★★★ —



★ 5 JUNE 2026 ★

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZONA



KEY PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICER

Colonel Oliver R. Lause
Commander, 56th Operations Group

OUTGOING COMMANDER

Lieutenant Colonel Kyle L. Babbitt

INCOMING COMMANDER

Lieutenant Colonel Adam C. Peterson

NARRATOR

Captain Jeremiah S. Colbath

GUIDON BEARER

Master Sergeant Kadeem S. Brisbane



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Opening Narration

Arrival of the Official Party

Presentation of the Colors

National Anthem

Technical Sergeant Carol S. Russell

Invocation

Jeffrey F. Jurchak

Remarks

Colonel Oliver R. Lause

Medal Presentation

Remarks

Lieutenant Colonel Kyle L. Babbitt

Change of Command

Remarks

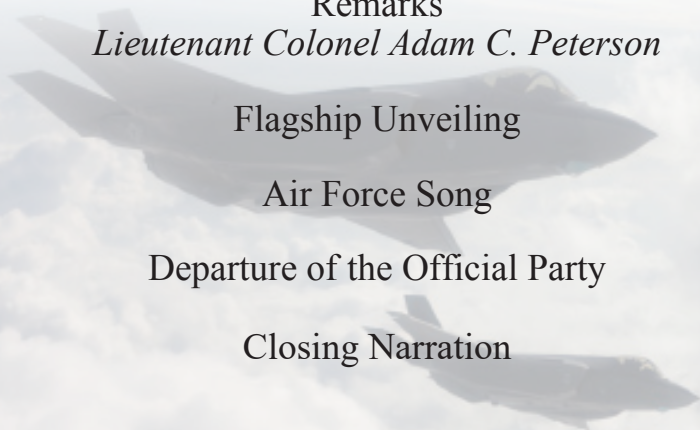
Lieutenant Colonel Adam C. Peterson

Flagship Unveiling

Air Force Song

Departure of the Official Party

Closing Narration



Lieutenant Colonel Kyle L. Babbitt

Lieutenant Colonel Kyle L. Babbitt is the outgoing Commander of the 63d Fighter Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.



Colonel Babbitt received his U.S. Air Force commission in 2008 upon graduation from the United States Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in Systems Engineering. After completing pilot training, he flew the A-10C in operational fighter assignments in Pacific Air Forces and Air Combat Command and the F-35A as an instructor and evaluator in Air Education and Training Command and Air Combat Command. After completing his assignment instructing at the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, he was selected to be a Combat Air Force Fellow where he served as the sole F-35 pilot stationed at Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces. He has served as an instructor pilot, flight evaluator, weapons officer, and weapons school instructor. Colonel Babbitt has flown multiple combat missions while participating in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. He is a command pilot with more than 2500 flying hours including more than 500 combat hours and is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School. Prior to his current assignment, he served as the Director of Operations, 63d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, Arizona. His next assignment will be the 56th Fighter Wing Chief of Staff.

EDUCATION

2008 Bachelor of Science, Systems Engineering, United States Air Force Academy, CO
2009 Air and Space Basic Course, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL
2013 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, AL, by correspondence
2015 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, AL
2018 USAF Weapons School, F-35A Weapons Instructor Course, Nellis AFB, NV
2022 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL, by correspondence
2022 Combat Air Force Fellowship, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI

ASSIGNMENTS

- Aug 08 – Jul 10, Student, Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training, Laughlin AFB, TX
- Aug 10 – Mar 11, Student, A-10C Replacement Training Unit, 358th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
- Apr 11 – May 12, A-10C Wingman, Forward Air Controller (Airborne), Scheduling Officer, 25th Fighter Squadron, Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea
- Jun 12 – Mar 15, A-10C Instructor Pilot, Forward Air Controller (Airborne), Navigation Officer & Chief of the Mission Planning Cell, 303d Fighter Squadron, Whiteman AFB, MO
- Apr 15 – Dec 18, F-35A Instructor Pilot, Chief of Scheduling, 62d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ
- Dec 18 – Jun 19, F-35A Instructor Pilot, Chief of Weapons and Tactics, 63d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ
- Jun 19 – Jul 20, F-35A Weapons School Instructor, Flight Commander, 6th Weapons Squadron, Nellis AFB, NV
- Jul 20 – Jul 21, F-35 Weapons School Instructor/Evaluator Pilot, Chief of Wing Standardization and Evaluation, 57th Wing, Nellis AFB, NV
- Jul 21 – Mar 22, Combat Air Force Fellow, Air War College, JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI
- Mar 22 – Jun 23, F-35A Evaluator Pilot/Wing Chief Instructor Pilot, 56th OSS, Luke AFB, AZ
- Jun 23 – Jun 24, Director of Operations and F-35A Evaluator Pilot, 63d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ
- Jun 24 – Present, Commander, 63d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ

Lieutenant Colonel Adam C. Peterson

Lieutenant Colonel Adam C. Peterson is the incoming Commander of the 63d Fighter Squadron at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona.

Colonel Peterson received his commission through Air Force ROTC at Arizona State University in 2009, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Marketing. After completing pilot training at Vance AFB, OK, he remained there as a First Assignment Instructor Pilot. He then flew the A-10C operationally in Pacific Air Forces and Air Combat Command before transitioning to the F-35A. Colonel Peterson was selected as a Combat Air Force Fellow and served as the Strategy Branch Chief for Pacific Air Forces. He has served as a flight evaluator, instructor pilot and Director of Operations in the Combat Air Forces as well as Air Education and Training Command. Colonel Peterson is a Senior Pilot with over 2,600 flying hours, including 300 combat hours in support of Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL and the Resolute Support mission.



EDUCATION

- 2009 Bachelor of Science, Business Marketing, Arizona State University, AZ
- 2010 Air and Space Basic Course, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2014 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2015 Masters of Education, Aviation Education, Trident University International, CA
- 2020 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, AL, by correspondence
- 2021 Combat Air Force Fellowship, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI

ASSIGNMENTS

- Jun 09 – Jun 10, Gold Bar Recruiter, AFROTC Det 025, Arizona State University, AZ
- Jun 10 – Jul 11, Student, Undergraduate Pilot Training, 33d Flying Training Squadron, Vance AFB, OK
- Jul 11 – Mar 12, Student, Instructor Pilot Training, 558th Flying Training Squadron, Randolph AFB, TX
- Mar 12 – Apr 15, T-6A Instructor/Flight Commander, 33d Flying Training Squadron, Vance AFB, OK
- Apr 15 – Jul 15, Student, Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals, 435th Fighter Training Squadron, Randolph AFB, TX
- Jul 15 – Feb 16, A-10C Student Pilot, 47th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
- Feb 16 – Feb 18, A-10C Instructor/Flight Commander, 25th Fighter Squadron, Osan AB, Republic of Korea
- Mar 18 – Jun 19, A-10C Flight Examiner/Executive Officer, 23d Wing, Moody AFB, GA
- Jun 19 – Jul 20, Chief of Standardization/Evaluation, 23d Fighter Group, Moody AFB, GA
- Jul 20 – Mar 22, Combat Air Force Fellow/Strategy Branch Chief, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI
- Mar 22 – Sep 23, Director of Operations, 354th Fighter Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ
- Sep 23 – Aug 24, F-35A Student Pilot, 62d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ
- Aug 24 – Jun 26, Director of Operations, 62d Fighter Squadron, Luke AFB, AZ

History of the 63d Fighter Squadron

Constituted as 63d Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) on 20 November 1940, the unit activated on 15 January 1941 at Savannah Air Base, Georgia. Assigned to the 56th Pursuit (later, 56th Fighter) Group, the squadron trained with the Seversky P-35 and the Curtis P-36 Hawk in Georgia and after 26 May at Charlotte Army Air Base, North Carolina. Later that year and into 1942, the squadron flew the Bell P-39 Airacobra and Curtis P-40 Warhawk on Air Defense and operational training unit missions. In October and November 1941, the squadron deployed to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. About 10 December 1941, the unit moved to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. On 15 January 1942, the squadron moved again to Farmingdale, New York. On the last day of the month, it was redesignated as the 63d Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) (Twin Engine). On 15 May 1942, it was redesignated again as the 63d Fighter Squadron (Twin Engine). On 1 June 1942, it was redesignated as the 63d Fighter Squadron. That month the squadron converted to the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. On 2 September 1942, the squadron moved to Bridgeport Muni Airport, Connecticut. On 27 December 1942, the unit left the United States for the war in Europe. On 12 January 1943, it arrived at Wittering, England. On 5 April 1943, it moved to Horsham St Faith, England. The squadron flew its first combat mission in European Theater of Operations (ETO) just over a week later. On 9 July 1943, the unit moved to Halesworth, England. On 28 February 1944, it was redesignated as the 63d Fighter Squadron, Single Engine. On 19 April 1944, the squadron moved to Boxted, England. On 21 April 1945, it flew its last combat mission. Around 15 September 1945, the squadron moved to Little Walden, England, in preparation to return to the United States. The unit left on 11 October 1945 and arrived five days later at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, where it inactivated on 18 October 1945. During the war, the squadron created 10 aces and was credited with 174.25 aerial victories.

On 1 May 1946, the squadron reactivated at Selfridge Field (later, Air Force Base), Michigan. Assigned again to the 56th Fighter (later, 56th Fighter-Interceptor) Group it flew its old friend, the Thunderbolt. The squadron converted to the North American P-51 Mustang that year. The next year, the squadron converted to the Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star, and on 24 April 1947, was redesignated as the 63rd Fighter Squadron, Jet Propelled. On 14 June 1948, it was redesignated as the 63d Fighter Squadron, Jet. The squadron was redesignated the 63d Fighter-Interceptor Squadron on 20 January 1950. During 1950, it transitioned to the North American F-86 Sabre. Around 5 January 1951, the squadron moved to Oscoda (later, Wurtsmith) Air Force Base, Michigan. On 6 February 1952, the 63d was assigned to the 4708th Defense Wing. On 1 July 1952, the squadron was assigned to the 4706th Defense Wing. On 16 February 1953, it was assigned to the 527th Air Defense Group. In 1955, the unit converted to the Northrop F-89 Scorpion and then added the F-86 back into the mix. On 18 August 1955, the squadron was reassigned to the 56th Fighter Group and moved to O'Hare International Airport, Illinois. The 63d was inactivated on 8 Jan 1958. During this period, its mission was Air Defense.

On 12 May 1975, the squadron was redesignated as the 63d Tactical Fighter Squadron. On 30 June 1975, the squadron activated at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, joined the 56th Tactical Fighter (later, 56th Tactical Training; 56th Fighter) Wing, and began flying the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II. In 1981, the squadron converted to the Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon. On 1 January 1981, the squadron was redesignated as the 63d Tactical Fighter Training Squadron. On 1 November 1991, the unit was redesignated as the 63d Fighter Squadron and reassigned to the 56th Operations Group. During this period, the squadron's mission was that of an F-4, and later F-16, replacement training unit with a combat-ready commitment.

On 25 February 1993, the 63d moved to Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and was assigned to the 58th Operations Group to fly F-16s. On 1 April 1994, the squadron was reassigned to the 56th Operations Group. During this time, the 63d conducted qualification training for USAF student pilots and transition training for pilots in F-16 aircraft. The squadron inactivated on 30 September 2009. The next chapter started on 1 August 2016 with the reactivation of the 63d, this time training pilots in the F-35A.

THE CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY

The change of command ceremony is a military tradition deeply rooted in history. Historically, the passing of a unit's flag was accomplished in front of the unit so all could see and witness the changing of leadership.

This symbolic tradition has survived throughout military history. The modern ceremony continues to announce to all, the authority of the incoming commander in the finest of military traditions.



Air Force Song

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;

Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em now, Give 'em the gun!

Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!

We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!

