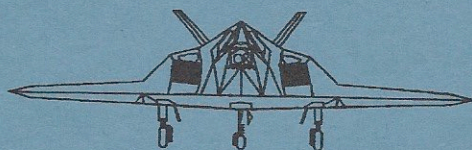
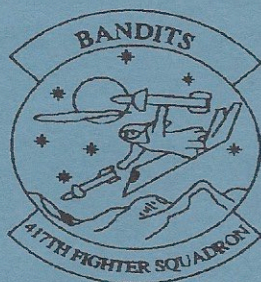


**Inactivation of the
417th Fighter Squadron
&
Redesignation of the
417th Fighter Squadron
to the
7th Fighter Squadron**



*Thursday, 2 December 1993
Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico*

Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico
Thursday, 2 December 1993

Presiding Official
Colonel Arthur P. Weyermuller
Commander, 49th Operations Group

Relinquishing Command
Lt Col James D. Wessler

Assuming Command
Lt Col James R. Phillips, Jr.

All guests are invited to a reception immediately following
the ceremony at the Officers' Club.

PROGRAM

Arrival Of

Colonel Arthur P. Weyermuller
Lieutenant Colonel James D. Wessler
Lieutenant Colonel James R. Phillips, Jr.

Presentation of Colors

National Anthem

Inactivating 417th Fighter Squadron

Redesignation of Squadron

Relinquish/Assumption of Command

Closing Remarks By

Colonel Arthur P. Weyermuller
Lieutenant Colonel James D. Wessler
Lieutenant Colonel James R. Phillips, Jr.

Retiring Of The Colors

The Air Force Song

All guests are invited to a reception immediately following
the ceremony at the Officers' Club.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES R. PHILLIPS, JR.

Lieutenant Colonel James R. Phillips, Jr., was born October 14, 1953 in Alexandria, VA. He is a 1972 graduate of La Jolla High School, La Jolla, CA. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the US Air Force Academy in 1976. He earned two master's degrees, one in aviation management and one in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, FL, in 1985. He completed Squadron Officer School by correspondence in 1984 and Air Command and Staff College in residence in 1991.

In June 1976, Lt Col Phillips was commissioned a second lieutenant upon graduation from the US Air Force Academy. After completing undergraduate pilot training at Williams Air Force Base, AZ, he began flying the A-7D Corsair II, at England Air Force Base, LA. While there, he transitioned to the A-10A Thunderbolt II, serving as an instructor pilot and flight examiner. In January 1981, he attended the Fighter Weapons Instructor Course at Nellis Air Force Base, NV. In January 1983, he transitioned back to the A-10A and was transferred to Suwon Air Base, Republic of Korea, serving as a flight commander, chief of wing weapons and instructor pilot. In 1987, he was selected as the team captain for the Pacific Air Forces A-10 Gunsmoke Team and received individual as well as team awards during the competition.

In August 1988, Lt Col Phillips was transferred to the Pentagon and worked for the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition. In this capacity he was responsible for testing and acquisition programs on future close air support aircraft. In August 1991, he transitioned to the F-117A and became the assistant operations officer for the 416th Fighter Squadron, Tonopah Test Range, NV. After the unit relocated to Holloman Air Force Base, NM, in June 1992, he was assigned as the Chief of Standardization/Evaluation for the 49th Fighter Wing. In March 1993, Lt Col Phillips assumed duties as Operations Officer for the 415 FS. He assumed command of the 417 FS in June 1993.

Lt Col Phillips is a command pilot with more than 2,900 hours all in single seat fighters. His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Air Force Achievement Medal.

He was promoted to his current rank October 1, 1992.

Lt Col Phillips is married to the former Sandra Troxel of Columbia, SC.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES D. WESSLER

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Wessler was commissioned in the Air Force in June 1972. Following commissioning, he attended undergraduate pilot training at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas. He then attended F-4 RTU at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. After RTU, he was assigned as an F-4 pilot to RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom. In 1977, he was transferred to Hahn Air Base, Germany, for a concurrent tour in the F-4 where he served as a squadron instructor pilot and wing flight examiner.

In the spring of 1978, he was assigned to Holloman Air Force Base as an AT-38 instructor pilot in the Lead-In Fighter Training program. In July of 1981, he was selected to attend F-15 RTU at Luke Air Force Base, AZ, and was subsequently assigned to the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing at Holloman. He initially served as a squadron pilot and instructor pilot in the 8th Tactical Fighter Squadron. He completed his F-15 tour as a wing flight examiner, attached to the 9th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

In February 1985, he was reassigned to the 314th Air Division at Osan Air Base, Republic of Korea where he was the Chief of Airspace Management in the Air Division Combat Plans Section.

Returning to the United States in February 1986, he then went to Langley Air Force Base, VA, and was assigned as the F-15 program functional manager on the HQ TAC/DO staff. In the summer of 1989, he was again assigned to Holloman in the F-15. He initially served as the assistant operations officer in the 7th Tactical Fighter Squadron. In April 1990, he moved to the wing staff as chief of current operations. In September 1990, he returned to the 7th Squadron, this time as the operations officer. From September to December 1991, he was the acting squadron commander of the 8th Fighter Squadron, still flying the F-15.

In December 1991, he assumed duties as the operations officer of the 433d Fighter Squadron and was once again in the AT-38 aircraft. In September 1992, his current duty as Commander of the 7th Fighter Squadron.

Lieutenant Colonel Wessler is a command pilot with over 3100 hours of flying time in fighter aircraft. His military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Air Force Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Lieutenant Colonel Wessler is married to the former Kris Pfautsh of Sullivan, Missouri. They have two sons, Jacob and Matthew, and a daughter, Anna.

417th Fighter Squadron

The 417th Fighter Squadron has a long and distinguished lineage dating back to 17 February 1943 when it was constituted as the 417th Night Fighter Squadron (NFS) flying P-70 fighters at Kissimmee Airfield, Florida, in preparation for reassignment to the European theater.

During WWII, the 417 NFS conducted operations from Scotland, England, Algeria, Corsica, France, and Germany and also flew the Beaufighter and P-61. On 9 November 1946, the 417 NFS was deactivated and then reactivated as the 417th Fighter Bomber Squadron (FBS) on 1 January 1953, flying the F-51 at Clovis AFB, New Mexico.

The squadron converted to the F-86 Sabrejet and was transferred to Hahn AB, West Germany, where it was commanded by Maj Charles E. Yeager (future Brigadier General "Chuck" Yeager). In 1958, the 417 FBS turned in all of its F-86 Sabrejets and deployed to Wheelus AB, Libya, where it transitioned to F-100 aircraft.

The squadron was redesignated as the 417th Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) on 8 July 1958 and served as part of the 50th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) at Hahn AB, West Germany, until July 1968. During the fall of 1968, the 417 TFS converted to the F-4 Phantom. The squadron was reassigned to Tactical Air Command as part of the 49 TFW at Holloman AFB, NM.

The 417 TFS deployed to Takhli, Thailand, on 10 May 1972 for a short combat tour in support of the Vietnam war effort. The 417th terminated its flying operations in the F-4 at Holloman AFB on 30 April 1977.

The unit's activation at Tonopah Test Range, Nevada, on 5 October 1989, saw it tasked with providing all replacement training for F-117A Stealth Fighter pilots. Additionally, during

Operation DESERT STORM, the 417th deployed six aircraft and pilots to Khamis Mushayt, Saudi Arabia, where the 417th pilots flew numerous combat missions with pin-point accuracy in support of United Nations' mandates.

In June of 1992, the 417th Fighter Squadron (FS) returned to Holloman AFB, New Mexico, as part of the 49th Fighter Wing. As the only Stealth Fighter training squadron in the Air Force, the 417 FS proudly continues its important mission.

EMBLEM

The "Ghost" is identical to the "Ghost" in the historical squadron emblem, with the exception of the mask (for "BANDITS"), and suggests an apparition or hard-to-see-being and represents the element of surprise. The black stylized aircraft is representative of the unit's Stealth Fighter mission. The elongated weapons suggest the pin-point accuracy and perfection of the F-117A's discretionary weapons. The descending aircraft (attack position) signifies unit readiness and determination. The moon, cloud, and night environment depict the squadron's primary mission to teach pilots how to employ the ideally suited Stealth Fighter at night. The mountains represent the total environment the 417 FS operates in.

Squadron Name: The Bandits.

Each and every upgrading pilot in the F-117A Stealth Fighter receives a Bandit number after their initial solo flight. The Bandit number tradition started with the first Tactical Air Command pilot, Maj Al Whitley, receiving Bandit #150. The newest Bandit earned Bandit #434 on 12 November 1993, continuing the 417th's four year tradition of providing the Air Force with quality F-117A pilots.

7th Fighter Squadron

The 7th Fighter Squadron, originally the 7th Pursuit Squadron, was activated on 15 January 1941 at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Nearly at full operational strength, the 7th moved to Morrison Field, Florida in May of 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor pressed the young and eager fighter squadron into an accelerated training program in preparation for war and the beginning of a proud squadron's illustrious history.

The 7th, part of the 49th Fighter Group, was in combat for three years during World War II and contributed 190 aerial victories to the group's tally of kills. The 7th Squadron and the 49th Group accounted for the most enemy aircraft destroyed in the air in the Pacific Theater during the war. During the Second World War, seventy-seven pilots wearing Bunyap patches scored 168 aerial victories. Seven of those individuals earned Ace status while assigned to the 7th.

The squadron campaign and battle streamers also include a tour of duty in Korea from 1950 to 1953. The 7th again deployed men and equipment to Southeast Asia from May to October 1972. In its 50 years of existence the 7th has willingly engaged or volunteered for every major conflict.

The 7th Fighter Squadron came to its present home at Holloman AFB, NM in 1968 after serving in both the European and Pacific Theaters. The 7th transitioned to the F-15 aircraft in 1978 and enjoyed numerous successful deployments around the world to include the first ever deployment of F-15 aircraft to Panama in support of US Counter Narcotic Operations in the Caribbean. The 7th transitioned again in 1992 to the AT-38 aircraft, with the task of training new fighter aviators.

The 7th Fighter Squadron has a rich heritage and has been in the forefront of tactical aviation for the past 50 years. This heritage will undoubtedly continue with the transition on 2 December 1993 to the F-117A and the assumption of the responsibility for training each of the Air Force's newest Stealth fighter pilots.

EMBLEM

The "Screamin Demons", as the squadron was originally called, adopted a new mascot during the Pacific campaign. The "Bunyap", a dealer of death, was derived from a glyph symbol used by the Australian Aborigines to cast spells on their enemies. Since the outcome of such spells was the same as the outcome of aerial contests with the 7th Fighter Squadron, it was only fitting that the Bunyap and the 7th go into combat as wingmen. The Bunyap was approved for the squadron shield in May 1944.