



### 51st Fighter Wing Shield

The shield of the 51st Fighter Wing contains the primary emblem element of Pegasus, the winged horse of mythology, rising in an attitude of flight with a flaming machine gun in each wing signifying accomplishment of a successful mission. The other element is a stylized cloud formation (nebula) that partitions the emblem, the top half of which is in Air Force reflex blue while the bottom half in Air Force yellow.

The scroll carries the wing's motto, Leading the Charge.

Origins of the shield date back to the opening days of World War II. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 51st Pursuit Group received orders to deploy to Australia and then to India. Just prior to leaving the States, Lt Col Homer A. Sanders, group commander, is said to have received permission from the Mobil Oil Company to use its logo, the red Pegasus, as the basis for the 51st's emblem. On 5 February 1942, the War Department officially approved the group's emblem of Pegasus firing machine guns and rising from a cloud formation. The emblem was displayed on a rectangular-shaped shield with the scroll below carrying the group's motto, "Deftly and Swiftly," which was taken from the emblem's significance statement.

Soon after the US Air Force became a separate military service on 18 September 1947, Air Force leaders initiated a service-wide test of its field organizations. Whereas the group served as the basic combat unit in World War II, the USAF decided upon a new field organizational structure that established the wing as the primary combat and administrative unit. Although not a part of the wing-base plan, the 51st Fighter Wing, activated on 18 August 1948, was one of the wings that came into existence following the service test. (The wing was redesignated as a fighter-interceptor wing on 1 February 1950). Additionally, the 51st Fighter Group (formerly, the 51st Pursuit Group) was assigned to the wing. At this time, the wing did not have an official emblem, but associated itself with the group's emblem.

As the wing-base field structure matured in the early 1950's, Strategic Air Command and Air Defense Command began to phase out many of its World War II combat groups as more wings assumed direct control of assigned combat squadrons. Elimination of these groups raised questions about honors. Many of the combat groups had compiled distinguished war records and received many honors unlike the post-war wings which possessed few if any honors. In 1954, HQ USAF decided to bestow "temporarily" the history and honors of the combat groups on like-numbered combat wings.

Within this category, HQ USAF approved the temporary bestowal of the World War II history and honors of the 51st Fighter Group on the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing in February 1955. At this time, the 51 FIW commander, Col Edwin C. Ambrosen, requested approval to adopt the 51st Fighter Group emblem as the wing's official emblem.

On 2 May 1956, HQ USAF officially approved the request. The scroll of the shield, now standardized Air Force wide in a "heater-style" design, read "51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing."

Over the succeeding years, the scroll was changed to reflect the current unit designation. Additionally, when a group was assigned to the wing, it used the wing shield with its current unit designation lettered on the scroll.

By the early 1990s the USAF Chief of Staff conducted an extensive review of all unit emblems. The wing commander, Brig Gen Robert G. Jenkins, submitted a request on 30 January 1993 to change the wing's motto from "Deftly and Swiftly" to "Leading the Charge" as a more accurate reflection of the 51st's ongoing mission on the Korean Peninsula. On 1 June 1993, the Air Force Historical Research Agency officially approved the request, and the wing's shield has remained unchanged since that time.

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When HQ USAF approved the modification of the emblem on 2 May 1956, it provided the wing with the following heraldic information:

**Wing Emblem:** Per fess nebuly abased azure and or, issuing from partition line a demi-pegasus argent with a machine gun in each wing bendwise sable, gun fire proper.

**Motto:** DEFTLY AND SWIFTLY (Later changed to LEADING THE CHARGE)

**Significance:** The shield is in the colors of the Air Force, and is divided by a nebuly partition line, representing clouds. Pegasus, the winged horse of mythology, is shown in an attitude of flight, rising to the sky, deftly and swiftly with a flaming machine gun in each wing, to accomplish the mission assigned successfully.