

27th Special Operations Wing Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico



**The Heritage of America's Western
Air Commandos**

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27th Special Operations Wing

Emblem and Motto



Significance of the Shield

The colors of the shield, ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow, are the colors of the United States Air Force. The blue represents the sky and the yellow represents molten gold. The clenched fist indicates strength. The magnolia is the state flower of Louisiana, where the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) was first organized.

Motto

Intelligent Strength

Mission Statement

The primary mission focus of the 27th Special Operations Wing is to generate and employ specialized aircraft and highly trained Air Commandos to execute and support special operations missions with unique capabilities including:

- Precision Air Fires
- Specialized Mobility
- Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
- Command and Control
- Information Operations
- Agile Combat Support

27th Special Operations Wing

History

The history of the 27th Special Operations Wing spans five wars and more than 70 years of almost continuous service. On 1 February 1940, the US Army activated the 27th Bombardment Group (Light) at Barksdale Field, Louisiana, equipping the new wing with B-18 aircraft. In October of that year, the wing moved to Hunter Field, Georgia, and began training in the new A-20 and A-24 aircraft. By November 1941, they were "ready" for the war that seemed inevitable. The men of the 27th left their homes and loved ones for the Far East.

While future allies reeled from Axis attacks around the world, there was no war in the Philippines. Arriving at Fort McKinley on 20 November, the 27th readied itself for delivery of its A-24 *Dauntless* dive-bombers. Concern grew as days turned into weeks and still the planes had not arrived. When the Japanese attacked the Philippines, on 9 December 1941, the situation had not changed.

To avoid capture or destruction, the ship carrying the planes diverted to Australia when the war escalated. On 18 December, Maj John H. Davies, 27 BG (L) commander, and twenty aircrew flew to Australia to retrieve their planes. However, a swift Japanese advance prevented his group from returning to the Philippines.

The remainder of the wing evacuated to the Bataan Peninsula, and arriving there on Thanksgiving Day, formed the 2nd Battalion (27th Bombardment Group) Provisional Infantry Regiment (Air Corp). For the 99 days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, until their surrender to the Japanese, they became the only Air Force unit in history to fight as an infantry regiment. They also had the dubious distinction of being the only unit to be taken captive in whole. After their surrender they were forced to endure the infamous Bataan Death March. Of the 880 or so airmen who were taken, less than half survived captivity. Major Davies, his small group, and the few remaining wing personnel who evacuated Bataan before its fall were assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group.

The name of the 27th was not allowed to be lost. On 4 May 1942, the 27 BG (L) transferred back to Hunter Field without men or equipment. Six months later the wing was once again ready for combat. Maintenance and support personnel went by sea to North Africa while aircrews and A-20 aircraft flew to South America then across to Africa. These aircraft and aircrews were transferred to the 47th Bombardment Group. The 27th began to rebuild for the third time with A-36 dive-bombers. Finally, the re-formed 27 FW flew its first combat missions of the war on 6 June 1943.

Flying A-36, P-40, and finally P-47 aircraft, the 27th Fighter-Bomber Group, as it was redesignated, fought the rest of the war in Europe. Its list of battles is a chronology of the war in Southern Europe. It includes the invasions of Sicily, Italy, Salerno, Southern France, and Anzio. It participated in the taking of Monte Cassino, the drive on Rome, attacked the Siegfried Line, and supported the Allied drive into Germany. With five Distinguished Unit Citations and a Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, it was among the most decorated air units in Europe.

Having served with distinction, the 27th Fighter Group was inactivated on 7 November 1945. In August 1946, the unit again activated, flying P-47s out of Fritzlar Air Base (AB), Germany. It stayed in Germany until transferred, without men or equipment, to Andrews Field, Maryland, in June 1947. A month later it was assigned to Strategic Air Command (SAC) and moved to Kearney Airfield, Nebraska.

The 27th Fighter Wing was organized on 15 August 1947, with the World War II 27th Fighter Group assigned as an operational unit. In November 1947, they began flying the F-82 *Twin Mustang* for long range bomber escort missions. Although its mission remained the same, a move to Bergstrom Air Force Base (AFB), Texas, in March 1949, brought a re-designation and new plane. The 27th Fighter-Escort Wing (FEW) received its first jet, the F-84 *Thunderjet*.

Shortly after the wing transitioned to the F-84, the Korean War began. Before deploying to the war zone, the 27 FEW ferried 180 planes, 89 in September and 91 in October, to reinforce units in Europe. The entire wing then flew to bases in Japan and Korea to begin air operations against communist forces in December. Proudly, the 27th became the first F-84 equipped unit to see combat in Korea.

Although their specialty was long-range bomber escort, the desperate situation in Korea dictated that the wing assume armed reconnaissance and close-air support missions immediately upon their arrival. During their first month in Korea, the wing helped ground forces stop the Chinese Communist Force advance into South Korea. A 27 FEW attack on the North Korean air base at Sinuiju, deep in "MiG Alley," pit 33 wing *Thunderjets* against 30 MiG-15s. Even though their

jets were severely outclassed by the more modern MiGs, aircrews fought a pitched half-hour long air battle with them. During the battle, wing aircrews claimed four kills, three probable kills, and four MiGs damaged with no F-84 losses. After flying over 23,000 combat hours and 12,000 sorties, all the wing's units returned to Bergstrom AFB, Texas in July 1951.



The 1950s brought other changes to the wing. As jets evolved so too did the wing's assigned airframes. The wing flew F-84E, F-84G, F-84F, F-101A and F-100D/F airframes. The wing also transferred from SAC to Tactical Air Command (TAC) in July 1957, with a completely new mission. The change in major commands also meant a change in wing designation to the 27th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) on 1 June 1958. On 18 February 1959, the wing departed Bergstrom AFB, without men or equipment, and moved to its present home at Cannon AFB, New Mexico. After arrival at Cannon AFB, the wing transitioned into the F-100 *Super Sabre*.

During the Vietnam War, the 27 TFW did not deploy to the combat area as in previous conflicts. Instead, the wing deployed individual F-100 squadrons from Cannon to Southeast Asia for varying lengths of time. The 522 Tactical Fighter Squadron (TFS) deployed to Takhli Royal Thai Air Base (RTAB), Thailand, from 12 December 1962 to 15 February 1963, and again from 16 March to 6 May 1964. They also deployed to DaNang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, from 8 August to 15 November 1964, and to the Philippines from 15 August to 25 November 1965. The 524 TFS also deployed to Takhli RTAB from late 1963 to early 1964. From June through November of 1965, the 481 TFS deployed to Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam.

On 20 November 1965, the 523 TFS transferred to Clark AB, Republic of the Philippines. For the next eight years it flew first with the 405 TFW at Clark AB, then with 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW) at Udorn AB, Thailand. While flying its F-4D aircraft for the 432 TRW, it received credit for downing two MiGs over Vietnam. The squadron returned to Cannon AFB and to the control of the 27 TFW on 31 August 1973.

The 27 TFW assumed a new role on 1 January 1966, when its mission changed to training pilots and maintenance personnel for F-100 units. The role expanded with the arrival of T/AT-33 aircraft. With these new planes the wing trained Forward Air Controllers and Air Liaison Officers.

A brand new aircraft arrived in July 1969, loaned to the 27th from Nellis AFB, Nevada - 10 F-111As facilitated training while the wing awaited its own planes. F-111Es began arriving in October 1969, but their stay was short. In the summer of 1971, wing aircrews ferried the last of them to RAF Upper Heyford, United Kingdom. Finally, on 13 November 1971, the 27 TFW received the first of its F-111Ds.

In May 1977, the 27 TFW deployed a unit of D-models for the first time; operating from Warner Robins AFB, Georgia, for three weeks. A year later, the 27th completed the first overseas deployment of the F-111D, operating from Gardemoen Air Base, Norway, in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations.

The 481 TFS inactivated in January 1980, and the 524 TFS was re-designated as the 524th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, leaving the 27th with one training and two fighter squadrons. In April 1990, the 428th Fighter Training Squadron was reactivated. The squadron received its first F-111G--an updated SAC FB-111--in June 1990.

During Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM the men and women of the 27 TFW played a role which was not what they envisioned. The aircrews and aircraft of the 27th did not deploy to the region. Instead, only support personnel and a combat support group element represented the wing. By the end of 1990, 241 people from Cannon AFB had deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD. On 16 January 1991, when the U.S.-led coalition force initiated an air assault against key Iraqi positions, the 27 TFW had 325 personnel serving in the Persian Gulf.

On 1 October 1991, the 27 TFW was re-designated the 27th Fighter Wing as part of an Air Force-wide reorganization. In addition, in June 1992, the 27th Fighter Wing became part of a new major command -- Air Combat Command (ACC). ACC was created when SAC, TAC, and Military Airlift Command merged to form two commands, ACC and Air Mobility Command. The 430th Electronic Combat Squadron (ECS), with its EF-111A *Ravens*, activated as part of the restructuring plan. The 430 ECS inactivated and replaced by the 429 ECS in June 1993.

The 27th Fighter Wing retired its last F-111D and received its first F-111E and F models in December 1992. F-111F crews and support personnel from the 522nd, 523rd and 524th Fighter Squadrons (FS) began rotations in September 1992 to Incirlik AB, Turkey, in support of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. Their commitment ended in August 1993.

Support personnel and EF-111 crews from the 430 (later the 429th) ECS, joined the F-model crews at Incirlik for Operation PROVIDE COMFORT beginning in December 1992 and continued until their retirement in 1998. In May 1993, EF-111s began their ongoing deployments to Saudi Arabia for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

The 27th Fighter Wing was arguably the largest wing in the Air Force throughout the early 1990s with 140 aircraft and more than 5,000 active duty officers and enlisted airmen. The wing served as the only unit in the Air Force operating the F-111 airframe from 1969 to 1998. In May 1995, the replacement of the wing's F-111Fs began with the arrival of its first F-16.



F-16s over Cannon AFB, NM

Much to the consternation of many, the official announcement was made on 2 May 1997, regarding the decision to retire the EF-111A. Exactly one year later the base held the retirement ceremony for the last F-111 airframe. The colors of the 429th Electronic Combat Support Squadron were retired one month later on 19 June 1998.

That same month, the 523 FS deployed to Karup Air Base, Denmark in support of NATO exercise Central Enterprise '98. The 523 FS flawlessly executed offensive counter-air missions including sweep, close-escort and force protection. The 523 FS also performed defensive counter-air strip alert missions for airfield and maritime asset defense.

In August 1998, the 524 FS deployed to Hill AFB, Utah for exercise Combat Hammer. During the exercise, the 523 FS dropped inert GBU-23 laser guided bombs and fired live maverick anti-tank missiles on Utah's test range. The hit rate was one of the highest ever seen in the Air Force, showcasing the lethality of the F-16 block 40.

On 18 September 1998, the governments of Singapore and the United States signed an agreement laying the foundation of the Peace Carvin III. As a Foreign Military Sales program for the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), Peace Carvin III was designed for the continued training of RSAF in rapid deployment and tactical employment of block 52 F-16C/D throughout a wide spectrum of missions including air-to-air, joint maritime and precision air-to-ground weapons delivery.

Reactivated on 12 November 1998, the 428 FS was tasked to take the lead in Peace Carvin III. The 428 FS was a hybrid of USAF and RSAF F-16C/Ds, manned by highly experienced USAF instructor pilots, skilled Singaporean pilots, and a combined RSAF and USAF team of maintenance and support personnel.

While deployed to the Gulf Region in December 1998, the F-16s from the 522 FS played a key role in Operation DESERT FOX. The 522 FS provided close air support alert, defensive counter-air alert and interdiction (bombing military targets in Iraq).

In May 1999, the 428 FS participated in its first official major exercise after its reactivation. The squadron deployed to Tyndall AFB, Florida for exercise Combat Archer. The exercise was designed to test weapons capabilities, tactics and employment. This included the first live firing of radar-guided air-to-air AIM-7 by the RSAF.

In July 1999, the 522 FS deployed to Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland to support NATO exercise Coronet Norsemen. The 522 FS served primarily as the combat air arm of the Iceland Defense Force. In August 1999, the 523 FS relieved the 522 FS from the exercise.

During Operation ALLIED FORCE in 1999, the 524 FS was notified for "on-call" duty to augment forces in the region. Quick termination of hostilities precluded the 524 FS from seeing action.

In June 2000, the 27 FW embarked on a rigorous six months of deployments. The wing first supported the AEF 7 with the deployment of the 523 FS for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. Being the lead wing for AEF 9, the wing deployed the 524 FS for SOUTHERN WATCH in September 2000. At the same time, the 522 FS also deployed to the desert for AEF 10 in support of Operation NORTHERN WATCH. Simultaneously, the 27 FW flew missions for both northern and southern Iraq enforcing the UN resolution of no-fly zones.

On 11 September 2001, the day of terrorists' attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the 27 FW stood ready. Aircraft from 522 FS, 523 FS and 524 FS went on alert – armed and ready to protect America at a moment's notice. The 27 FW flew many Operation NOBLE EAGLE missions protecting American cities and leaders after the attack.

Following the model set by its predecessors in Vietnam, the wing once again did not deploy as a wing for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, but deployed squadrons. In December 2002, the 524 FS deployed to the desert until April 2003. The 524 FS dropped over 969,000 pounds of precision-guided munitions during the war, more than any other F-16 Block 40 squadron.

A sense of doom best described the feeling that set over Cannon AFB on 13 May 2005, when the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee released their recommendations regarding base realignments and closures. Cannon AFB was one of 10 Air Force installations slated for closure.

City officials lobbied to keep Cannon AFB open and their efforts were rewarded when on 25 August 2005, the BRAC commission overturned its recommendation. The Air Force was given until 2009 to provide a new mission to Cannon AFB otherwise the base would close in 2010.

On 20 June 2006, it was announced that Cannon AFB would become the new home of the 16th Special Operations Wing (SOW). On 1 October 2007, a new era began at Cannon AFB as the new Special Operations Wing activated as the 27 SOW, a new component of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The new mission provided the opportunity to not only continue, but add to the 27th's rich and storied heritage.

Soon after the wing received its new mission, the landscape of Cannon AFB began to change. Gone were the F-16 *Falcons* and in their stead – the MC-130W *Combat Spear* of the newly arrived 73rd Special Operations Squadron. Activated and re-designated as a Special Operations Squadron in October 2006, the 73rd arrived at Cannon in November 2007. On the coat tails of the 73 SOS came the activation of the 318 SOS on 16 May 2008, after nearly 34 years of inactivity. By mid 2008, came the 3 SOS with men and equipment, from Creech AFB, Nevada. Of note, while the squadron itself relocated, the men and women continued to perform their MQ-1 mission maintaining a vigilant eye over the battlefield.



The year 2009 brought tremendous growth to the wing in terms of operational squadrons, as well as, the number of Airmen assigned to the 27 SOW. The wing activated or transferred three operational squadrons – the first being the transfer, from Hurlburt Field, Florida, of the 16 SOS or *Spectre* on 30 June 2009. Next to arrive, a squadron familiar to Clovis AFB, today's Cannon AFB, yet unknown to many – the 33 SOS, when the squadron activated on 31 July 2009. As a fighter squadron, the 33rd spent a short period of time on the high plains in 1953. A not so long forgotten fighter squadron stood in the shadows throughout the remainder of the summer months of 2009, awaiting its turn to again activate. Inactivated prior to the 27th's mission change, the 524 SOS activated on 2 October 2009, bringing with it a very storied past.

With the operational growth came growth in airframes. The 16 SOS, of Vietnam fame, brought the side-firing *Spectre* AC-130H gunship. A mere month later, after activation, the 33 SOS introduced Cannon AFB to their version of a remotely piloted airframe, the MQ-9 *Reaper*. Those familiar with the old 524 FS and its F-111 aircraft were now witness to the new 524 SOS and their De Havilland Dash-8, dual propeller driven airframe. Prior to this time, the Dash-8 had been a part of the 318 SOS.

The wing neared the F-111 days in terms of population in 2009, as the wing continued to expand. Originally expected to grow to an estimated 4,100 Airmen, up from the 1,100 when AFSOC inherited the base, the wing surpassed the 4,700 mark early in 2011.

During 2009, the wing transitioned from a wing in infancy to a fully engaged combat wing. With the 16 SOS continually deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM since 2001, Admiral Eric Olsen, COMUSSOCOM, sought another airframe to divert some of the workload from the AC-130H/U models. The Admiral found that diversion in the way of modification. The MC-130W of the 73 SOS served as his platform for relief. Under a program known as *Dragon Spear*, the MC-130W underwent modification to an armed overwatch platform, further enhancing the wing's combat capability. The monthly "rotators" became the norm as they accepted deployers and delivered re-deployers monthly.

As the year 2010 arrived, so too did the transfer, without men and equipment, of the 20 SOS. Having flown the now retired MH-53 *Pave Low*, 20 SOS personnel awaited the arrival of their latest airframe - the CV-22 *Osprey*. By October 2010, the 73 SOS had deployed its *Dragon Spear* package in support of Operation NEW DAWN. Yet another of the wing's squadrons found itself preparing for deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the 318 SOS. Plans had been made and set in motion for the M-28 *Sky Truck's* first deployment by the end of the year. Meanwhile, the PC-12 finished its third year of continuous worldwide deployments.

Early 2011, specifically 7 April, AFSOC's newest airframe, the MC-130J, had a squadron to call its own – the 522 SOS. The wing activated the squadron on 7 April 2011 and received its newest airframe on 29 September 2011. The 522 had previously been assigned to the 27th as a Fighter Squadron, much like the 524 SOS.

COMMANDERS

Commander	Date Assigned
<u>27th Bombardment Group (Light)</u>	
Col Clarence L. Tinker	01 Feb 40
Lt Col W. Wright	01 Feb 40
Col Guy L. McNeal	Unknown
Col John H. Davies	Jul 41
Lt Col Harry F. Van Leuven	c. Dec 41
Lt Col John D. Stevenson	14 Jul 42
	11 Apr 43
<u>27th Fighter-Bomber Group</u>	
Col Dorr E. Newton Jr.	Aug 43
Col Stephen B. Mack	06 Aug 43
	22 Apr 44
<u>27th Fighter Group</u>	
Lt Col William R. Nevitt	May 44
Inactivated	10 Sep 44
Col Clarence T. Edwinson	07 Nov 45
Col Robert P. Montgomery	c. 20 Aug 46
Col Clarence T. Edwinson	Nov 46
	Feb 47
<u>27th Fighter Wing</u>	
Col Gwen G. Atkinson	28 Jul 47
Col Ashley B. Packard	15 Aug 47
	07 Jan 48
<u>27th Fighter-Escort Group</u>	
Col Raymond F. Rudell	01 Feb 50
Col Donald J. M. Blakeslee	01 May 51
	06 Jul 52
<u>27th Strategic Fighter Wing</u>	
Col Richard N. Ellis	20 Jan 53
	02 Aug 54
<u>27th Fighter-Bomber Wing</u>	
Col Charles M. Walton Jr.	01 Jul 57
Col Ivan W. McElroy	Jul 57
	08 Jan 58
<u>27th Tactical Fighter Wing</u>	
Brig Gen Ivan W. McElroy	01 Jul 58
Col John L. Gregory Jr.	10 Mar 58
Inactivated	15 Jul 58
Col Gilbert L. Meyers	28 Jan 59
Col Arlie J. Blood	18 Feb 59
Col Gilbert L. Meyers	10 May 59
Col Thomas A. Robertson	04 Aug 59
Col Arvis L. Hilpert	22 Aug 59
Col Jack C. Berger	12 Oct 59
Col Charles E. Simpson	17 Jul 61
Col Dale S. Sweat	15 Jul 63
Col Robert A. Tyler	15 Aug 63
	31 Dec 65

Commanders (cont)

Commander	Date Assigned
Col Herndon F. Williams	25 May 67
Col Homer K. Hansen	24 Jul 67
Col William L. Ford	01 Apr 68
Col Jimmy J. Jumper	16 Apr 68
Col Frank C. Buzze	15 Jul 68
Col Charles E. Francis	12 May 70
Col Richard E. Little	28 Jan 72
Col John H. Bennett	25 May 73
Col Cecil D. Crabb	18 Jul 75
Col Thomas J. Hickey	06 Aug 76
Col Joseph D. Moore	18 Nov 77
Col Robert T. McCann	07 May 79
Col William K. James	05 Aug 80
Col Joseph K. Stapleton	03 Sep 82
Col James E. Salminen	11 May 84
Col Needham B. Jones	07 Sep 84
Col Henry R. Becker	24 Sep 86
Col Donald L. Peterson	05 Jul 88
Col Arnold L. Franklin, Jr.	14 Sep 90
<u>27th Fighter Wing</u>	01 Oct 91
Brig Gen Richard N. Goddard	30 June 92
Col Lance L. Smith	Jul 93
Brig Gen William M. Guth	15 Sep 93
Col Michael J. Koerner	06 Oct 95
Col David E. Clary	08 Aug 97
Col Lloyd S. Utterback	29 Jun 99
Col Jeffrey A. Remington	23 May 00
Col Robert Yates	28 Mar 02
Col John D. Posner	02 Apr 04
Col Scott D. West	24 May 06
<u>27th Special Operations Wing</u>	01 Oct 07
Col Timothy J. Leahy	28 Sep 07
Col Stephen A. Clark	27 May 09
Col Albert M. Elton II	08 Jul 11

27th SOW Lineage

22 December 1939	Constituted as 27th Bombardment Group (Light)
1 February 1940	Activated as 27th Bombardment Group (Light)
23 August 1943	Re-designated as 27th Fighter-Bomber Group
21 June 1944	Re-designated as 27th Fighter Group
28 July 1947	Established as 27th Fighter Wing
15 August 1947	Organized as 27th Fighter Wing
1 August 1948	Activated as 27th Fighter Wing
1 February 1950	Re-designated as 27th Fighter-Escort Wing
20 January 1953	Re-designated as 27th Strategic Fighter Wing
1 July 1957	Re-designated as 27th Fighter-Bomber Wing
1 July 1958	Re-designated as 27th Tactical Fighter Wing
1 October 1991	Re-designated as 27th Fighter Wing
1 October 2007	Re-designated as 27th Special Operations Wing

Higher Headquarters Assignments

1 Feb 1940 - 17 Feb 1943	Unknown
18 Feb 1943 - 27 May 1943	Northwest African Training Command
28 May 1943 - 23 Jul 1943	Northwest African Tactical Air Force
24 Jul 1943 - 4 Aug 1943	3rd Air Defense Wing
5 Aug 1943 - 21 Nov 1943	64th Fighter Wing
22 Nov 1943 - 31 Dec 1943	XII Air Support Command
1 Jan 1944 - 14 Aug 1947	Unknown
15 Aug 1947 - 5 Aug 1951	8th Air Force
19 Nov 1950 - 29 Nov 1950	Attached to Far East Air Forces
30 Nov 1950 - 15 Jul 1951	Attached to 5th Air Force
6 Aug 1951 - 7 Jan 1958	42d Air Division
6 Oct 1952 - 13 Oct 1952	Attached to Far East Air Forces
13 Oct 1952 - 13 Feb 1953	Attached to 39th Air Division
7 May 1955 - 17 Aug 1955	Attached to 7th Air Division
8 Jan 1958 - 18 Feb 1959	12th Air Force
15 Jul 1958 - 18 Feb 1959	Attached to 834th Air Division
18 Feb 1958 - 1 Jul 1975	832nd Air Division
21 Oct 1962 - 1 Dec 1962	Attached to 3rd Air Division (Provisional)
1 Jul 1975 - 1 Oct 1991	12th Air Force
1 June 1992 - Sep 2002	8th Air Force
Sep 2002 - 30 Sep 2007	12th Air Force
1 Oct 2007 - Present	Air Force Special Operations Command

Assigned Stations

27th Bombardment Group (Light)

Barksdale Field, LA
Hunter Field, GA
Philippine Islands
Hunter Field, GA
Key Field, MS
Hattiesburg AAB, MS
Esler Field, LA
Hattiesburg AAB, MS
Harding Field, LA
Camp Kilmer, NJ
Ste-Barbe-du-Tlelat, Algeria
Nouvion AB, Algeria
Ras el Ma Airdrome, French Morocco
Korba South, Tunisia
Gela East, Sicily

27th Fighter Bomber Group

Gela East, Sicily
San Antonio AB, Sicily
Capaccio AB, Italy
Gaudio AB, Italy
Castel Volturno AB, Italy
Santa Maria AF, Italy

27th Fighter Group

La Banca AF, Italy
Giampinc Airdrome, Italy
Volone AF, Italy
Serragio, Corsica
Le Luc AB, France
Salon AF, France
Loyettes Airdrome, France
Tarquinia Airdrome, Italy
Pontedera Airdrome, Italy
St-Dizier AF, France
Toul/Ochey, France
Biblis Airdrome, Germany
Sandhofen Airdrome, Germany
Echterdingen, Germany
Camp Shanks, NY
Fritzlar AB, Germany
Bad Kissingen, Germany
Andrews Field, MD
Kearney AAF, NE
Bergstrom AFB, TX

27th Fighter-Escort Wing

Bergstrom AFB, TX

1 Feb 40

1 Feb 40 - 7 Oct 40
7 Oct 40 - 21 Oct 41
20 Nov 41 - 9 Apr 42
4 May 42 - 14 Jul 42
14 Jul 42 - 15 Aug 42
15 Aug 42 - 10 Sep 42
10 Sep 42 - 20 Sep 42
20 Sep 42 - 25 Oct 42
25 Oct 42 - 21 Nov 42
24 Nov 42 - 12 Dec 42
26 Dec 42 - 5 Jan 43
5 Jan 43 - 3 Apr 43
4 Apr 43 - 5 Jun 43
5 Jun 43 - 27 Jul 43
30 Jul 43 - 23 Aug 43

23 Aug 43

23 Aug 43 - 3 Sep 43
3 Sep 43 - 23 Sep 43
25 Sep 43 - 4 Nov 43
4 Nov 43 - 19 Jan 44
10 Apr 44 - 8 May 44
9 May 44 - 7 Jun 44

30 May 44

7 Jun 44 - 12 Jun 44
12 Jun 44 - 4 Jul 44
4 Jul 44 - 13 Jul 44
13 Jul 44 - 25 Aug 44
28 Aug 44 - 30 Aug 44
30 Aug 44 - 12 Sep 44
12 Sep 44 - 3 Oct 44
3 Oct 44 - 3 Dec 44
3 Dec 44 - 21 Feb 45
22 Feb 45 - 19 Mar 45
19 Mar 45 - 6 Apr 45
5 Apr 45 - 24 Jun 45
23 Jun 45 - 15 Sep 45
15 Sep 45 - 20 Oct 45
6 Nov 45 - 7 Nov 45
20 Aug 46 - 25 Jun 47
25 Jun 47 - 25 Jun 47
25 Jun 47 - 16 Jul 47
16 Jul 47 - 15 Mar 49
16 Mar 49 - 1 Feb 50

1 Feb 50

1 Feb 50 - 20 Jan 53

Assigned Stations (Cont'd)

27th Strategic Fighter Wing
Bergstrom AFB, TX

20 Jan 53
20 Jan 53 - 1 Jul 57

27th Fighter-Bomber Wing
Bergstrom AFB, TX

1 Jul 57
1 Jul 57 - 18 Feb 59

27th Tactical Fighter Wing
Cannon AFB, NM

1 Jul 58
18 Feb 59 - 30 Sep 91

27th Fighter Wing
Cannon AFB, NM

1 Oct 91
1 Oct 91 - 30 Sep 07

27th Special Operations Wing
Cannon AFB, NM

1 Oct 07
1 Oct 07 - Present

Campaign Participation Credits

World War II

<u>Campaign</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates</u>
Philippine Islands	7 Dec 1941 - 10 May 1942
Air Combat, EAME* Theater	7 Dec 1941 - 11 May 1945
Sicily	14 May 1943 - 17 Aug 1943
Naples-Foggia	18 Aug 1943 - 21 Jan 1944
Anzio	22 Jan 1944 - 24 May 1944
Rome-Arno	22 Jan 1944 - 9 Sep 1944
Northern France	25 Jul 1944 - 14 Sep 1944
Southern France	15 Aug 1944 - 14 Sep 1944
North Apennines	10 Sep 1944 - 4 Apr 1945
Rhineland	15 Sep 1944 - 21 Mar 1945
Central Europe	22 Mar 1945 - 11 May 1945

Korean War

<u>Campaign</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates</u>
Chinese Communist Forces Intervention	3 Nov 1950 - 24 Jan 1951
1st United Nations Counteroffensive	25 Jan 1951 - 21 Apr 1951
Chinese Communist Forces Spring Offensive	22 Apr 1951 - 8 Jul 1951

* European, African, Middle Eastern

Awards and Citations

Distinguished Unit Citations (DUC) *Awarded for extraordinary valor in action on or after 7 Dec 1941.)*

Philippine Islands	7 Dec 1941 - 10 May 1942	27th Bombardment Group (Light)
Philippine Islands	8 Dec 1941 - 22 Dec 1941	27th Bombardment Group (Light)
Philippine Islands	6 Jan 1942 - 8 Mar 1942	27th Bombardment Group (Light)
Italy	10 Sep 1943	27th Fighter-Bomber Group
France	4 Sep 1944	27th Fighter Group

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

7 Dec 1941 - 10 May 1942	27th Bombardment Group (Light)
17 Oct 1944 - 4 Jul 1945	

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

9 Nov 1950 - 31 May 1951	27th Fighter-Escort Wing
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Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA)

18 Dec 1976 - 17 Dec 1977	27th Tactical Fighter Wing
1 Jan 1981 - 30 Jun 1982	27th Tactical Fighter Wing
1 Jan 1988 - 31 Dec 1989	27th Tactical Fighter Wing
1 Jun 1996 - 31 May 1998	27th Fighter Wing
1 Oct 2007 - 30 Sept 2009	27th Special Operations Wing

Assigned Aircraft

<u>Type Aircraft</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Assigned</u>
B-18	<i>Bolo</i>	1 February 1940
A-20	<i>Havoc</i>	March 1940
A-24	<i>Dauntless</i>	August 1941
A-20	<i>Havoc</i>	14 July 1942
A-36A	<i>Apache/Invader</i>	11 April 1943
P-40F/L	<i>Warhawk</i>	19 January 1944
P-47D	<i>Thunderbolt</i>	7 June 1944
P-51D	<i>Mustang</i>	25 June 1947
F-82	<i>Twin Mustang</i>	24 November 1947
F-84E	<i>Thunderjet</i>	6 February 1950
F-84G	<i>Thunderjet</i>	6 July 1952
F-84F	<i>Thunderstreak</i>	18 June 1954
F-101A	<i>Voodoo</i>	2 May 1957
F-100D/F	<i>Super Saber</i>	18 February 1959
F-111E	<i>Aardvark</i>	30 September 1969
F-111D	<i>Aardvark</i>	13 November 1971
F-111G	<i>Aardvark</i>	June 1990
F-111F	<i>Aardvark</i>	February 1992
EF-111A	<i>Raven</i>	5 May 1992
F-111E	<i>Aardvark</i>	December 1992
F-16C/D	<i>Falcon</i>	25 June 1996
MC-130W	<i>Combat Spear</i>	November 2007
PC-12	<i>Pilatus</i>	8 January 2008
MQ-1	<i>Predator</i>	21 July 2008
AC-130H	<i>Spectre</i>	19 May 2009
CV-22	<i>Osprey</i>	19 May 2010
MQ-9	<i>Reaper</i>	28 June 2010
MC-130J	<i>Commando II</i>	29 September 2011



General John "Joe" Cannon

Cannon Air Force Base History

Cannon Air Force Base, a major Air Force Special Operations Command installation, lies on the high plains of eastern New Mexico, near the Texas Panhandle. The base is six miles west of Clovis and is 4,295 feet above sea level.

Cannon AFB can trace its roots back to June 1929, when it served as a civilian passenger facility, then known as Portair Field, for early commercial transcontinental flights. At Portair Field, passengers from Los Angeles, California, arrived at dusk, and after their day-long four-stop flight, transferred to an eastbound train for night travel. Westbound travelers boarded Ford Tri-Motor planes in the morning and proceeded to Los Angeles by air, with stops at Albuquerque, New Mexico; Winslow, Arizona; and Kingman, Arizona. This service lasted about 15 months until longer-range aircraft made it possible to bypass Clovis. The field then became the Clovis Municipal Airport.

War brought new importance to the field. In August 1942, the War Department selected Clovis as one of three sites for a "super-airdrome"; Salina, Kansas and Ephrata, Washington were the others. Each was equipped to handle "blind landings" and the "larger aircraft which were coming into use or were projected for the future". Construction for Clovis Army Air Base began on 3 September 1942, with the first unit, the 409th Base Headquarters and Air Base Squadron arriving on 24 December 1942.

From 1943 to late 1945, Clovis Army Airfield served as an aircrew training base for bombardment organizations. The 302d Bombardment Group trained B-24 air crews from June to December 1943. From February to April 1944, B-17 air crews from the 25th, 497th, 498th, 499th, and 500th Bombardment Groups completed their training. Training of B-29 units started in February 1945 and continued until 1946. In December 1944, the base, renamed Clovis Army Air Field in April 1943, added Photo and Weather Reconnaissance courses to its curriculum.

Replacement crew training and gunnery classes lasted throughout the war years.

As post-war demobilization took effect, Clovis Army Air Field operations dwindled. By February 1946, personnel shortages reduced bombardment training to a minimum. On 8 July 1946, the station was placed on reduced operational status with most of its activities closed out. Inactivation came on 28 May 1947.



During its period of inactivation, the field changed hands frequently. Strategic Air Command (SAC) took control of it first on 1 August 1947. SAC then handed the base to Air Training Command on 1 April 1950, who gave it to Tactical Air Command (TAC) on 23 July 1951. Also during this time, on 13 January 1948, the name changed to Clovis AFB.

TAC began using Clovis AFB in October 1951. The 140th Fighter-Bomber Wing, an Air National Guard unit called to active duty, and its F-51 *Mustangs* remained at Clovis AFB until it inactivated and returned to the Guard on the last day of 1952. Taking personnel from the 140 FBW, the 50 FBW activated New Year's Day 1953, flying F-51 aircraft. The wing remained at Clovis until it transferred overseas in August. In the months immediately prior to its departure, the wing transitioned to the F-86. The 388 FBW took the place of the 50 FBW in November 1953, only to be replaced eleven

months later by the 312 FBW. The new wing flew F-84 *Thunderjets*, but acquired F-86H *Sabers* by the end of the year. Later, in December 1956, it transitioned to F-100 *Super Sabres*.

During 1958, a number of important changes affected Clovis AFB. On 1 June, Clovis AFB became a "permanent" Air Force installation. A week later its name was changed to honor General John Kenneth Cannon. In October, the 474th Fighter-Bomber Wing and the 832d Air Division joined the 312 FBW at Cannon AFB.

On 18 February 1959, the redesignated 312th Tactical Fighter Wing inactivated. On that same day, the 27th Tactical Fighter Wing transferred, without men or equipment, from Bergstrom AFB, Texas, to Cannon AFB. The men and planes of the 312 TFW were all assigned to the 27 TFW.

Throughout the early 1960s, planes and crews from Cannon AFB deployed around the world. They went to Berlin during the Berlin Wall Crisis, to Florida when the Cuban Missile Crisis flared, and to Vietnam and Thailand when the conflict there began to broaden. The 27 TFW's 481 TFS was the first F-100 unit to deploy to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam. The 481 TFS "Crusaders" flew over 3,000 combat sorties while stationed there.

The mission of Cannon AFB began to change in late 1965. Cannon's tactical mission gave way to that of a training mission as the base became a training ground for F-100 pilots and mechanics in December. Three years later, in December 1968, training Air Liaison Officers and Forward Air Controllers was added to its curriculum. This change brought large numbers of T/AT-33 aircraft to Cannon. Additionally, the 474 TFW transferred to Nellis AFB, Nevada, in September 1965.

During the late 1960s, Cannon AFB's mission began to change back to a tactical one. In July 1969, F-111As from Nellis AFB arrived, on loan, to help train 27 TFW personnel to operate that weapon system. October 1969 brought F-111E models to the base. Those E-models stayed until they were ferried to Royal Air Force Upper Heyford, England, in July 1971. The first F-111D model arrived on 13 November 1971. Gradually, training for the aging F-100s diminished until the last F-100 left Cannon AFB in June 1972. The A/AT-33s remained until October 1973. When the last T/AT-33 left, the F-111D became the only type aircraft assigned to Cannon AFB. At the same time, the 27 TFW became the only operational unit in the world equipped with the F-111D.

On 28 December 1988, Cannon's expansion began as a result of decisions made by the Secretary of Defense's Commission on Base Realignment and Closures. Expansion-related construction at Cannon continued for many years, although most of the personnel growth was completed by the end of 1993. Construction directly related to base expansion totaled \$161 million.

Before expansion began in 1990, Cannon's population consisted of about 4,040 people: 390 officers, 3,200 enlisted airmen and 450 civilians. After expansion, Cannon's population will be about 6,000 people: approximately 530 officers, 4,600 enlisted airmen and 900 civilian employees, an increase of approximately 2,000 working people. Expansion brought the base's total military and dependent population, both on and off base, to about 11,300 people.

When all was said and done, several things transpired at Cannon. The 27th Tactical Fighter Wing designation was changed to the 27th Fighter Wing, and only Cannon flew F-111 airframes. This distinction remained theirs alone until the retirement of the F-111 in 1996. The 428 FS inactivated and the 522 FS, 523 FS and 524 FS transitioned to the F-16. Cannon distinctly became the 100th base to fly the F-16 airframe. On 2 May 1997 the decision was announced to retire the EF-111A, thus ending a twenty-year reign of the F-111 airframe.

Further changes came to Cannon with the arrival of the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) in 1998. Under the Peace Carvin III agreement, RSAF airmen would train alongside American airmen, to fly and maintain the unique Block 52 F-16C/D. The new squadron reactivated the colors of the 428 FS, and at full strength consisted of 165 personnel.

Change came to Cannon AFB once again, when on 12 May 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) committee unveiled its list of realignments and closures as it related to DoD installations. To the surprise of many, Cannon AFB was one of 10 Air Force installations marked for closure. In reaction to the BRAC announcement a BRAC Commission public hearing was held in an effort to have Cannon AFB removed from the list.

City officials lobbied to keep Cannon open. Their efforts were rewarded when only three months after announcing the proposed closure the commission overturned its recommendation on 25 August 2005. The Air Force was given until 2009 to provide a new mission to Cannon AFB otherwise the base would close in 2010.

On June 20, 2006, it was announced that Cannon AFB would become the new home of the 16th Special Operations Wing (SOW). On 1 October 2007, the new Special Operations Wing activated at Cannon AFB as the 27 SOW. The re-designation to a Special Operations Wing marked the ninth re-designation in the wing's history.

The re-designation also meant a new mission for the men and women of Cannon AFB. Infiltration, exfiltration and re-supply of special operations forces; air refueling of special operations rotary wing and tilt rotor aircraft; and precision fire support are synonymous with special operations and quite naturally became Cannon AFB's newest mission.

With the mission change came a change in the sounds heard over the eastern plains of New Mexico. Gone was the roar of jet engines, replaced by the soothing hum of reciprocating turboprop engines used by aircraft employed in Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). In August 2007, AFSOC announced the move of the 73rd Special Operations Squadron (SOS) with its newly acquired MC-130W *Combat Spears* from Hurlburt Field to Cannon AFB and the activation of the 318 SOS with its PC-12 *Pilatus*.

Sounds were not the only change at Cannon AFB during the period of changing missions and airframes. The base' elevation also took on a much different appearance. Cannon AFB became the number one base within the contiguous 48 states, in terms of Military Construction dollars. Many of the existing aircraft hangars required modification in preparation for the wing's new airframes; facilities required address, as well, as many of the current facilities needed attention. New facility construction appeared base wide; new flight simulators; squadron operations buildings; a new consolidated communication facility and a new Dining Facility, capable of handling Cannon's increased growth, were but a few of the many projects the base witnessed in its first 3.5 years as an AFSOC base.

More than 50 years ago "a pile of lumber in a dusty cornfield, a pigpen, and a chicken coop, both occupied" marked the location of what would become the base headquarters. Today, Cannon AFB, with its newest myriad of airframes and eight operational flying squadrons, proudly boasts the title as the *Western Home of America's Air Commandos*, a key component of the Air Force's most specialized command – AFSOC.