

THE ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

Charles A. Ravenstein  
United States Air Force Historical Research Center

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## Foreword

*The Organization and Lineage of the United States Air Force* is part of a continuing series of historical volumes produced by the Office of Air Force History in direct support of Project Warrior. Since its beginnings in 1982, Project Warrior has captured the imagination of Air Force people around the world and reawakened a keener appreciation of our fundamental purpose as a Service: to deter war, but to be prepared to fight and win should deterrence fail.

Military history helps provide a realistic perspective on warfare. Through the study of past events, we gain insight into the capabilities of armed forces and, most importantly, a sound knowledge of the policies, strategies, tactics, doctrine, leadership, and weapons that have produced success in battle. Each of us, in broadening our knowledge of air power's past, helps to maintain the most effective Air Force possible, now and in the future.

LARRY D. WELCH, General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

## The Author

CHARLES A. RAVENSTEIN was a historian and deputy chief of the Research Division, USAF Historical Research Center at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, where he specialized in organizational lineage and honors since January 1967. Before joining the Historical Research Center he served 20 years in the Air Force as an enlisted historian in Europe, Alaska, and the Pacific, retiring as a Senior Master Sergeant. He held a B.S. in History (1970) and an M.S. in Education (1973) from Troy State University. He wrote or collaborated on the following Air Force histories: with Charles W. Dickens, *Air Weather Service and Meteorological Satellites, 1950–1960* (Air Weather Service Historical Study No. 5, 1973); with Maurer Maurer, *Constraints on Army Air Forces Operations* (Historical Research Division, Aerospace Studies Institute, Air University, June 1969); *U.S. Air Force Victory Credits, Southeast Asia, A Preliminary List* (Historical Research Division, Air University, and Office of Air Force History, October 1971); with Maurer Maurer, “Peaceful Employment of U.S. Airpower,” a chapter in John H. Scrivner, Jr., ed., *A Quarter Century of Air Power* (Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps, Air University, 1973); *U.S. Air Force Combat Victory Credits, Southeast Asia* (Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Air University, 1974); co-authored with R. Frank Futrell, et al, *Aces and Aerial Victories, The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia, 1965–1973* (Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Air University, and the Office of Air Force History, 1976); author of “A Guide to Air Force Lineage and Honors”, 2d ed., revised (Research Division, USAF Historical Research Center, 1984); *Air Force Combat Wings, Lineage and Honors Histories, 1947–1977* (Office of Air Force History, 1984). Mr. Ravenstein died on January 10, 1986, as this book was being readied for publication.



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## Preface

This brief study surveys the evolution of the Air Force field structure from the earliest military aeronautical organizations to those comprising the modern Air Force. It does not examine every organizational facet of the Army Air Service, Army Air Corps, Army Air Forces, or United States Air Force, but it does trace most of the major organizations. It is intended to describe how the Air Force came to be, how it evolved organizationally, and how it was organized to accomplish its defense mission.

The work consists of three parts. The first part surveys the beginning of the United States Army's air arm, birth of the Air Service, principal organizations created between the world wars, tremendous organizational growth during World War II, and the changes that occurred in the immediate postwar period. Part two, perhaps of most interest to Air Force personnel, discusses the superstructure of the service—the commands, separate operating agencies, direct reporting units, and numbered and named air forces. The lineages of these upper echelon establishments are traced from their creation to 1983. The final part examines the current USAF organizational hierarchy, from major commands down to functional entities, including detachments and operating locations.

Heraldic illustrations in this volume are current through 1983. Only organizations with officially recognized emblems are represented. The U.S. Air Force Historical Research Center is responsible for all Air Force heraldry and now retains the original paintings of these emblems as an authoritative record. Colors shown in the emblems are reproduced as faithfully as the printing process will allow.

In preparing this study I consulted numerous published and unpublished works. Of special note: Alfred Goldberg, ed., *A History of the United States Air Force, 1907–1957* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1957); Juliette A. Hennessy, *The United States Army Air Arm, April 1861 to April 1917* (USAF Historical Division, Research Studies Institute, Air University, 1958); and Maurer Maurer, ed., *Air Force Combat Units of World War II* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961; New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1963; New York: Arno Press, 1979; Washington: Zenger, 1981; Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1983). The periodic directories of USAF organizations and individual USAF organization record cards maintained at the USAF Historical Research Center also proved vital for section two.

I am deeply indebted to the authors whose works I consulted, including the unsung individuals who prepared the periodic directories and annotated the organizational record cards of USAF organizations. Special thanks are owed to R. Cargill Hall, Chief of the Research Division at the USAF Historical Research Center, for his advice on details and his guidance during the production of the manuscript, and to his editorial assistant, Pauline Tubbs, who ably and patiently typed, proofread, and edited the typescript. In the Office of Air Force History, Richard H. Kohn, John F. Shiner, Herman S. Wolk and Joseph P. Harahan worked closely with the author to revise the manuscript for publication. Anne E. Shermer designed the volume and guided it through publication. The U.S. Army Institute of Heraldry merits special recognition for providing the original paintings of USAF command and unit emblems. The following individuals completed this exacting work with the coordination of Dr. Opal V. Landrum and under the direct supervision of Ms Nadine M. Russell: Ms Susan Beall, Mrs. Alma E. Thaxton, Mr. Edward G. Preston, and Mr. Robert L. Hopkins. I alone am responsible for any errors remaining.

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## Introduction: The Nature of Lineage

All Air Force organizations are planned entities, many having lengthy lives under a variety of names. To avoid confusing one organization with another, the Air Force employs an identification system known as lineage. Although an organization that exists today may have begun its existence with a different name or a different number, or both, and may have existed for one or more periods only on paper, it can be identified as the same organization through its lineage. Tracing unit lineage involves determining all of the organizational actions which have affected an organization throughout its existence—actions such as constitution, reconstitution, disbandment, inactivation, activation, and redesignation. Because such terms have a precise organizational or “legal” meaning, a glossary of definitions follows this work as Appendix I.

The USAF policy regarding lineage is spelled out in Air Force Pamphlet 210-2, 2 June 1975:

One of the fundamental policies of the Air Force is that each organization will have a unique lineage. This policy was in effect in the War Department when military aviation was under the Army and has been continued by the United States Air Force since 1947.

No two organizations can have the same lineage, although at different times in their existence they may have possessed similar or even identical designations.

Lineage is based both upon organizational status and organizational actions. Several factors control organizational actions. Among the most

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crucial determinants is whether an organization is a unit or an establishment, and whether it is an Air Force-controlled (AFCON) or major command-controlled (MAJCON) organization.

There are only two types of organizations within the Air Force: units and establishments. Every Air Force organization must be one or the other. A unit is a military organization that is either constituted by directives issued by Headquarters USAF (in which case it is AFCON), or it is designated by a major command or separate operating agency (in which case it is MAJCON). Units are divided into three categories: *headquarters*, *squadrons*, and *miscellaneous*. Of the three, the headquarters unit has a special role, for it always serves as the headquarters of an establishment and always has the word “headquarters” in its designation. The squadron, on the other hand, has existed exclusively as the working level air unit since the designation of the 1st Aero Squadron in 1913. This unit category now includes the numbered flight, since flights are merely abbreviated squadrons. This category of unit always has the words “squadron” or “flight” in its designation. Finally, miscellaneous units, the third category of Air Force units, includes all units not covered in the headquarters and squadron categories, such as bands, hospitals, dispensaries, and schools. No unit, regardless of category, has a headquarters of its own.

All units regardless of category must be readily identifiable; thus, each one has a distinctive designation. The designation includes a generic name (for example, squadron) denoting its position in the hierarchy, a functional name (for example, Bombardment) describing its primary mission, and in most cases a numerical or geographical name (examples, 9th, as in “9th Bombardment Squadron,” or Craig, as in “USAF Hospital, Craig”) that distinguishes it from all other units having the same functional and generic names. Without such distinctive designations, the lineage of Air Force organizations would be almost impossible to determine.

The second basic type of Air Force organization is an entity to which no personnel are (or can be) assigned: an establishment. Air Force Regulation 26-2, 6 January 1982, defines an establishment as:

An entity consisting of a headquarters, at group level or above, to which subordinate units are or can be assigned with attendant personnel, equipment and facilities. The name of the establishment is implicit in the name of the headquarters unit.

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Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, is the name of the headquarters unit serving as the primary component of Strategic Air Command, an establishment. All establishments must have a headquarters. Organizations without a headquarters, no matter how large they might be, are miscellaneous units or squadrons.

Every Air Force unit is assigned to some establishment. Small establishments are assigned to larger establishments. The normal hierarchy (“chain of command”) assigns flights and squadrons to groups, groups to wings, wings to divisions, divisions to air forces, air forces to commands, and commands to USAF.

Besides being divided between units and establishments, all Air Force organizations are also separated by organizational status; they are either Air Force-controlled (AFCON) or major command-controlled (MAJCON).<sup>\*</sup> Between AFCON and MAJCON organizations, there are major differences in lineage terms and in lineage itself. AFCON organizations are either active, inactive, or disbanded. Active organizations are part of the regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard. Inactive AFCON organizations are either constituted but not yet activated, or were activated and later inactivated. Disbanded organizations are those for which the legal authority has been withdrawn and their designation retired, preserved only in historical records. AFCON organizations are either named or assigned a number of no more than three digits (a practice that has prevailed since 1948, when four-digit designations were reserved for MAJCON unit designations).

Among AFCON organizations, AFCON units are always constituted by HQ USAF and assigned to major commands or separate operating agencies for activation. All organizational actions involving AFCON units, including intercommand reassignment, are controlled by HQ USAF through numbered letters issued by the Director of Manpower and Organization. For lineage purposes, an AFCON unit’s existence commences with its constitution and continues, whether active or inactive, through all redesignations until such time as it is disbanded. A disbanded AFCON unit can be reconstituted and activated, thereby continuing its lineage and history. An AFCON unit can be consolidated with one or more AFCON units to form a single unit.

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<sup>\*</sup>Separate Operating Agencies (SOAs) also control MAJCON units.



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As one might expect, the lineage terms that apply to AFCON establishments differ from those of AFCON units. The life of an AFCON establishment begins with its establishment (either active or inactive) and continues, whether active or inactive, through redesignations, until such time as it is disestablished. It can be reestablished (either active or inactive). The lineage of an establishment depends entirely on the status of its headquarters component. An AFCON establishment may also be consolidated with one or more AFCON establishments to form a single establishment.

A MAJCON unit, unlike its AFCON counterpart, is by definition a temporary organization with no permanent lineage or history, even if it exists in fact for years. Headquarters USAF (HQ USAF) assigns blocks of four-digit numbers to its MAJCOMs and SOAs for use in designating MAJCON units. Subject to HQ USAF approval, the MAJCOMs and SOAs are generally free to direct organizational actions effecting changes to squadrons, miscellaneous units, and headquarters of establishments below air division level. All MAJCON units are designated, rather than constituted, and, until 1968, “organized” instead of activated. Modern MAJCON units are designated and activated. As long as a MAJCON unit remains active, regardless of its age or the frequency of its redesignations, its lineage continues. Some MAJCON units trace their lineage to AAF Base Units organized in 1944. But once a MAJCON unit is inactivated (the term used since 1968 to replace “discontinued”), its existence terminates. Even if another MAJCON unit is formed immediately with the same designation, the same mission, and at the same base, the latter unit’s lineage is separate from the former unit. MAJCON establishments are also temporary in nature. They are formed when their headquarters unit is designated and cease to exist when their headquarters component is inactivated.

Within the MAJCON family of organizations is an offshoot called “provisional.” All provisional units and establishments are controlled by major commands (MAJCOMs) or separate operating agencies (SOAs) and have certain characteristics of regular MAJCON organizations. Provisional units and establishments are even more temporary in nature than regular MAJCON units and establishments. Presently, provisional organizations may be named or numbered. When numbered, they are designated with a numerical suffix to avoid confusion with regular units, and the word

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“provisional” is included (example: Tactical Airlift Squadron Provisional, 6677th). Provisional organizations are designated by MAJCOMs or SOAs. They are then activated and personnel attached for duty. When their mission is completed, provisional units are inactivated and attached personnel revert to their permanent units. Provisional organizations cannot be revived once they are inactivated, and when a provisional organization is replaced by a regular organization, the latter has no lineal relationship with the former.

Besides describing the organization of the service, this study contains the lineages of Air Force major commands, separate operating agencies, direct reporting units, and named and numbered air forces. All of these organizations are AFCON establishments.

# Chapter I

## Organization of the Air Force, 1907–1947

On August 1, 1907, the United States Army Signal Corps established a small Aeronautical Division to take “charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred subjects.” There were at the time few aeronautical “subjects” upon which to build. From the close of the Civil War until 1907, the Signal Corps had acquired only eight balloons, though two more were procured in 1907. A year later the Signal Corps purchased a small dirigible, used at Fort Omaha, Nebraska, for the instruction of servicemen.\* The Signal Corps began testing its first airplane at Fort Myer, Virginia, on August 20, 1908, and on September 9, Lieutenant Frank P. Lahm became the first Army officer to fly in the machine, as a passenger. A few days later, on September 17, 1908, Lieutenant Thomas E. Selfridge, flying with Orville Wright, was killed when the plane crashed. Subsequently, after more testing with a second, improved Wright Flyer, the Army formally accepted this airplane, identified as “Airplane No. 1,” on August 2, 1909.

Four years after the Signal Corps took charge of air matters, Congress in March 1911, for the first time, appropriated funds for Army aeronautics: \$125,000 for fiscal year 1912. By the close of October 1912, the Signal Corps had acquired eleven aircraft but possessed only nine. “Airplane No. 1” had been given to the Smithsonian Institution and one other had been demolished in an accident. A few months later, in early 1913, the Army

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\*But not until May 26, 1909, did Lieutenants Frank P. Lahm and Benjamin D. Foulois make their first ascent and qualify as the airship's first Army pilots.

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ordered its aviators training in Augusta, Georgia, and Palm Beach, Florida, to Texas to take part in 2d Division maneuvers. In Galveston on March 3, the Chief Signal Officer designated the assembled men and equipment the "1st Provisional Aero Squadron," with Captain Charles DeF. Chandler as squadron commander. The 1st Provisional Aero Squadron, organized at Galveston on March 5, 1913, began flying activities a few days later. On December 4, general orders redesignated the unit as the 1st Aero Squadron, effective December 8, 1913. This first military unit of the U.S. Army devoted exclusively to aviation has remained continuously active since its creation.\* Assigned a role in the Punitive Expedition on the Mexican border in 1916, this squadron also became the first air combat unit of the U.S. Army.

Meantime, Congress appropriated \$100,000 for Army aeronautics in fiscal year 1913 and \$125,000 in fiscal year 1914, but the legislators limited to 30 the number of officers who could be detached to Signal Corps aviation activities. Another bill called for the creation in the Signal Corps of an Aviation Section, instead of the existing Aeronautical Division. The new section would be comprised of 60 officers and 260 enlisted men. Passed by the Congress and signed by the President, this bill became law on July 18, 1914. It directed the Aviation Section to operate and supervise "all military [U.S. Army] aircraft, including balloons and aeroplanes, all appliances pertaining to said craft, and signalling apparatus of any kind when installed on said craft." The section would also train "officers and enlisted men in matters pertaining to military aviation," and thus embraced all facets of the Army's air organization and operation. The old Aeronautical Division continued to exist, but operated as the Washington office of the new section.

When World War I broke out in Europe in August 1914, the 1st Aero Squadron counted 12 officers, 54 enlisted men, and six aircraft, figures that increased in October to 16 officers, 77 enlisted men, and eight aircraft. From August 1914 until Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, this squadron represented the entire tactical air strength of the U.S. Army. In December 1915 the entire Aviation Section consisted of 44 officers, 224 enlisted men, and 23 airplanes—still a tiny force when compared to the fledgling air forces of the European powers. But the war in Europe focused more attention on aviation. An urgent "deficiency act"

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\*It is presently designated the 1st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron.

on March 31, 1916, provided \$500,000 for the Aviation Section, and on August 29—influenced by the possibility of U.S. entry into the European war—Congress appropriated a whopping \$13,281,666 for military aeronautics and another \$600,000 for the purchase of land for airfields. That same spring Congress had already passed the National Defense Act that increased the number of personnel authorized in the Aviation Section from 60 to 148 officers, and gave to the President the power to establish the enlisted strength. The act further provided a Signal Officers Reserve Corps of 297 officers and a Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps of 2,000 enlisted men to be trained under the direction of the Aviation Section.

By this time the Aviation Section consisted of the Aeronautical Division, the Signal Corps Aviation School at San Diego, the 1st Aero Squadron (then on duty with the expeditionary force in Mexico), and the 1st Company, 2d Aero Squadron, on duty in the Philippines. In October 1916, Aviation Section plans called for two dozen squadrons—seven for the Regular Army, 12 for the National Guard divisions, and five for coastal defense—plus balloon units for the field and coast artillery. Each squadron was to be composed of 12 airplanes, and in December 1916 the seven Regular Army squadrons either had been or were being organized. All 24 squadrons had been formed by early 1917, but the 1st Aero Squadron remained the only one fully organized and equipped. Plans for still greater expansion of the Aviation Section were incomplete when the United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917.

On May 20, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson issued an executive order transferring aviation from the Signal Corps to two agencies under the Secretary of War: the Bureau of Aircraft Production, headed by Mr. John D. Ryan, and the Division of Military Aeronautics, directed by Maj. Gen. William L. Kenly. On May 24, the War Department officially recognized these two Army agencies as comprising the Air Service. Three months later, on August 27, the President appointed Mr. Ryan Director of Air Service and Second Assistant Secretary of War.

Despite a combat record of only nine months (February to November 1918), the Air Service made a respectable showing during World War I. The 740 American aircraft assigned to squadrons at the front on November 11, 1918, Armistice Day, represented little more than 10 percent of the total aircraft strength of Allied nations. But the Air Service had conducted 150

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separate bombing attacks, and penetrating as far as 160 miles behind German lines, its aircraft had dropped about 138 tons of bombs. In all, the Air Service downed 756 enemy aircraft and 76 enemy balloons, while losing 289 airplanes and 48 balloons.

The dispersal of aero squadrons among various Army organizations during the war had made it difficult to coordinate aerial activities, which led to the creation of higher echelon organizations. At the front, squadrons with similar functions were formed into groups, the first organized in April 1918 as the I Corps Observation Group. The following month the 1st Pursuit Group was formed, and in July 1918 the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) organized its first aircraft unit higher than a group—the 1st Pursuit Wing—made up of the 2d and 3d Pursuit Groups and, later, the 1st Day Bombardment Group. In November 1918 the AEF possessed 14 groups (seven observation, five pursuit, and two bombardment).

Following the armistice, demobilization was rapid and thorough. Between November 11, 1918, and June 30, 1920, officer strength plummeted from 19,189 to 1,168, and enlisted strength dropped from 178,149 to 8,428. At war's end the Air Service possessed 185 aero squadrons; 44 aero construction; 114 aero supply, 11 aero replacement, and 150 spruce production squadrons;\* 86 balloon companies; six balloon group headquarters; 15 construction companies; 55 photographic sections; and a few miscellaneous units. By November 22, 1919, all had been demobilized except one aero construction, one aero replacement, and 22 aero squadrons, 32 balloon companies, 15 photographic sections, and a few miscellaneous units.

Following World War I, the strength of the Air Service matched what Congress considered satisfactory for peacetime. The Army Reorganization Act of 1920 made the Air Service a combatant arm of the Army and gave the Chief of the Air Service the rank of major general and his assistant chief the rank of brigadier general. Tactical air units in the United States were placed under the nine Army corps area commanders where they continued to be employed primarily in support of the ground forces. The Chief of the Air Service retained command of various training schools, depots, and other activities exempted from Army corps control. During most of

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\*The spruce production squadrons engaged in lumbering, mainly in the Pacific Northwest, to obtain high quality timber for aircraft construction.

the 1920s, the total offensive strength of the Air Service in the United States consisted of one pursuit, one attack, and one bombardment group. One pursuit and one bombardment squadron were also assigned overseas in the Canal Zone and the Philippines, with two squadrons of each type stationed in the Hawaiian Islands. The Air Service focused initially on observation and pursuit aviation, with major aeronautical development efforts concentrated in the Engineering Division at McCook Field, Dayton, Ohio.

The formal training establishment took shape during the 1920s. The Air Service concentrated primary flying training at Brooks Field and advanced flying training at Kelly Field, both located at San Antonio, Texas. Balloon training was offered at Scott Field, Illinois, with technical schools for officers and enlisted men established at Chanute Field, also in Illinois. The Air Service (later, Air Corps) Tactical School trained officers to command higher units and taught the employment of military aviation. First located at Langley Field, Virginia, this school moved to Maxwell Field, Alabama in 1931. An engineering school was part of the Engineering Division at McCook Field (later located at Wright Field), Ohio.

The Air Corps Act of 1926 changed the name of the Air Service to Air Corps, but left unaltered its status as a combatant arm of the Army. The act also established the Office of Assistant Secretary of War for Air. The Air Corps had at this time 919 officers and 8,725 enlisted men, and its "modern aeronautical equipment" consisted of 60 pursuit planes and 169 observation planes; total serviceable aircraft of all types numbered less than 1,000. In August 1926 the Army established the Air Corps Training Center at San Antonio, Texas. A few weeks later, on October 15, 1926, the logistical organization was placed on firmer footing with the establishment of the Materiel Division, Air Corps, at Dayton, Ohio. A year later this division moved to nearby Wright Field, thereafter the primary base for air logistics. In Texas, Randolph Field, the "West Point of the Air," was dedicated on June 20, 1930, and became the headquarters of the Air Corps Training Center and the site of the primary flying school in 1931. By June 30, 1932, the Air Corps had grown to 1,305 officers and 13,400 enlisted men, including cadets, and possessed 1,709 aircraft distributed among four attack, 12 bombardment,\* 16 pursuit, and 13 observation

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\*Air leaders had long desired an independent, offensive, role for airpower, and thus encouraged development of long-range bombardment. In the early 1930s Air Corps leaders pushed ahead with bomber development, notably the B-17. The prototype, developed by Boeing Airplane Company and designated XB-17 by the Air Corps, began its test flights in July 1935.

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squadrons. The Corps also possessed at this time two airship and two balloon squadrons.

On March 1, 1935, the General Headquarters Air Force (GHQAF), which had existed in gestation since October 1, 1933, became operational and assumed command and control over Air Corps tactical units. Tactical units, less some observation squadrons, scattered throughout the nine Army corps areas, transferred to this initial air force. The three GHQAF wings were located at Langley Field, Virginia; Barksdale Field, Louisiana; and March Field, California. The Office of the Chief of the Air Corps (OCAC) and GHQAF existed on the same command echelon, each reporting separately to the Army Chief of Staff. The GHQAF Commander directed tactical training and operations, while the Chief of the Air Corps maintained control over procurement, supply, training schools, and doctrine development. On March 1, 1939, the Chief of the Air Corps assumed control over the GHQAF, centralizing command of the entire air arm.

During the crisis over the partition of Czechoslovakia in the summer and autumn of 1938, the German Luftwaffe in a show of force demonstrated that airpower had become a powerful instrument in international relations.\* President Franklin D. Roosevelt acknowledged the growing importance of airpower, recognized that the United States might be drawn into a European war, and believed firmly, according to his adviser, Harry Hopkins, "that airpower would win it." Assured of a favorable reception in the White House, the Air Corps prepared plans in October 1938 for a force of some 7,000 aircraft. Soon afterwards, President Roosevelt asked the War Department to prepare a program for an Air Corps composed of 10,000 airplanes, of which 7,500 would be combat aircraft. In a special message to Congress on January 12, 1939, the President formally requested this program. Congress responded on April 3, authorizing \$300 million for an Air Corps "not to exceed 6,000 serviceable airplanes."

Beginning in September 1939, the German Army and the German Air Force rapidly conquered Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, and within one year had driven the British off the continent. Leaders of the U.S. Army Air Corps now found themselves in the novel position of receiving practically anything they asked for. Plans soon called for 54 combat

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\*In September 1938, 500 Luftwaffe aircraft supported Nazi ground forces that occupied the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia.



groups. This program was hardly underway before revised plans called for 84 combat groups equipped with 7,800 aircraft and manned by 400,000 troops by June 30, 1942. All told, Army Air Forces strength in World War II swelled from 24,000 men and 2,400 aircraft in 1939 to 2,253,000 men and women and 63,715 aircraft in 1945.

With this enormous expansion underway, the War Department began in 1939 to establish new bases and air organizations in rapid succession overseas and in the continental United States. At the same time air leaders worked to create an independent institutional structure for air within the U.S. Army. Both necessity and desire thus caused a blitz of organizational changes from 1940 through 1942. On November 19, 1940, the General Headquarters Air Force was removed from the jurisdiction of the Chief of the Air Corps, and given separate status under the commander of the Army Field Forces. Seven months later, these air combat forces returned to the command of air leaders as Gen. George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, established the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941, to control both the Air Corps and the Air Force Combat Command (formerly GHQAF).

In the interim, the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Air Districts had been formed in December 1940 to help control the growing tactical organizations. These districts were redesignated in April 1941 as the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Air Forces; later, in September 1942, the Arabic designations were changed to the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces. The Hawaiian Air Force was activated on November 1, 1940, the Panama Canal Air Force on November 20, 1940, and the Alaskan Air Force on January 15, 1942. These air forces subsequently became the Seventh, Sixth, and Eleventh Air Forces in 1942. The Philippine Department Air Force was activated on September 20, 1941, and redesignated Far East Air Force\* on October 28, 1941. On April 12, 1941 the War Department directed each numbered air force to organize a bomber command and an interceptor command to supervise and control offensive and defensive tasks beyond the capabilities of existing combat wings.

Additional hierarchical links had to be forged for noncombat activities. The Air Corps Maintenance Command was established under the Materiel Division, Air Corps, on June 25, 1941, to control supply and

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\*Not to be confused with the subsequent Far East Air Forces, now known as Pacific Air Forces—a major command.

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maintenance. It was redesignated Air Service Command on November 6, and made a separate command of the Air Corps on December 11, 1941. That left the Materiel Division free to concentrate on procurement and research and development. The Materiel Division passed through several designations: Air Corps Materiel Command on April 1, 1942, Air Force Materiel Command on April 22, 1942, Materiel Command on April 15, 1943, and AAF Materiel Command on January 15, 1944. On March 26, 1941, the Air Corps set up the Technical Training Command to direct the new programs for schooling ground crews and technicians. The Chief of the Air Corps, however, retained direct control of the pilot and crew training centers until January 23, 1942, when the new Flying Training Command absorbed them. Finally, another new agency, the Air Corps Ferrying Command, was established on May 29, 1941, to fly aircraft overseas for delivery to the British. As the functions of the Ferrying Command expanded, it was redesignated, in July 1942, as the Air Transport Command.

On the combat side of the ledger, an original Air Transport Command, established in April 1942, was in July redesignated I Troop Carrier Command when the Ferrying Command assumed the "ATC" designation. The 5th Air Support Command, constituted in August 1941 and redesignated Ninth Air Force in April 1942, moved to North Africa and later served in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). The Eighth Air Force, activated in January 1942, moved to Europe in June of that year. In February 1944, the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe was established, with strategic direction over the Eighth and Fifteenth Air Forces. The Far East Air Force was redesignated Fifth Air Force in February 1942. Tenth Air Force was created in the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater in February 1942. Twelfth Air Force was activated in August 1942 and served in both the European and Mediterranean theaters. The Thirteenth Air Force was activated in New Caledonia, South Pacific, in January 1943, followed by the Fourteenth Air Force, activated in China in March 1943. Fifteenth Air Force was activated in the Mediterranean theater in November 1943. The Twentieth Air Force was directed by Gen. Henry Arnold from Washington, D.C. It was activated in April 1944 and operated from the China-Burma-India theater and subsequently from the Pacific theater.

A War Department reorganization on March 9, 1942, created three

autonomous Army commands: Army Ground Forces, Services of Supply (later, in 1943, Army Service Forces), and Army Air Forces (AAF). This reorganization dissolved the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps and the Air Force Combat Command, and merged all elements of the air arm into the Army Air Forces. Within the AAF, effective July 31, 1943, the Flying Training Command and the Technical Training Command merged to form the AAF Training Command. On July 17, 1944, the AAF Materiel Command and Air Service Command were placed under a new organization, AAF Materiel and Services. On August 31 this new command was redesignated AAF Technical Service Command. On December 15, 1944, the Continental Air Forces was formed to control First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces and I Troop Carrier Command. Organizations engaged in evaluation of tactics and equipment—the AAF Tactical Center, the Proving Ground Command, and the AAF Board—were grouped together on June 1, 1945, under the AAF Center.

All of these actions affecting the air forces and commands that comprised the AAF emphasized the surge towards an independent service and the expansion of combat forces that took place during World War II. Before 1939 the Army's air arm was a fledgling organization; by the end of the war the Army Air Forces had become a major military organization comprised of many air forces, commands, divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons, plus an assortment of other organizations.

## Chapter II

### Lineage of USAF Major Components, 1947 to the Present

Rapid demobilization of forces immediately after World War II, although sharply reducing the size of the Army Air Forces, left untouched the nucleus of the postwar Air Force. A War Department letter of March 21, 1946, created two new commands and redesignated an existing one; Continental Air Forces was redesignated Strategic Air Command, and the resources of what had been Continental Air Forces were divided among Strategic Air Command and the two newcomers: Air Defense Command and Tactical Air Command. These three commands, together with the older Air Transport Command, represented the strategic, tactical, defense, and airlift missions that provided the foundation for building the postwar, independent Air Force.

The National Security Act of 1947 became law on July 26, 1947. It created the Department of the Air Force, headed by a Secretary of the Air Force. Under the Department of the Air Force, the act established the United States Air Force, headed by the Chief of Staff, USAF. On September 18, 1947, W. Stuart Symington became Secretary of the Air Force, and on September 26, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz became the USAF's first Chief of Staff.

The major commands of the USAF in September, 1947 included:

Air Defense Command	Bolling Field Command
Air Materiel Command	Caribbean Air Command
Air Proving Ground Command	Far East Air Forces
Air Training Command	Seventh Air Force
Air Transport Command	Strategic Air Command
Air University	Tactical Air Command
Alaskan Air Command	U.S. Air Forces in Europe

Subsequently, various USAF major commands have come and gone, and separate operating agencies and direct reporting units have appeared. All of these organizations represent upper echelon establishments. Within the Department of the Air Force the highest echelon establishment is the United States Air Force, through which Headquarters USAF controls directly the major commands, separate operating agencies, and direct reporting units.

## Major Commands

Of the 14 establishments having major command status in September 1947, only five have continued in that status with the same name: Air Training Command, Alaskan Air Command, Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and United States Air Forces in Europe. A few others have continued as major commands, but with name changes; Air Materiel Command, Air Transport Command, and Far East Air Forces became, respectively, Air Force Logistics Command, Military Air Transport Service (later, Military Airlift Command), and Pacific Air Forces. Air Proving Ground Command lost and regained major command status in 1948, losing that status again in 1957. Seventh Air Force (later, Pacific Air Command) lost major command status in 1949. Bolling Field Command (later, Headquarters Command, USAF) and Caribbean Air Command (later, United States Air Forces Southern Command) were inactivated in 1976. Air University lost major command status in 1978, but regained it in July 1983. Air (later, Aerospace) Defense Command inactivated in 1980. Eight new commands have appeared since September 1947: Continental Air Command, Northeast Air Command, Special Weapons Command, 3d Air Division (in major command status), Air Force Systems Command, Air Force Communications Command, United States Air Force Security Service (later, Electronic Security Command), and Space Command. Of these eight commands, only

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

the last four remain active as commands. (The 3d Air Division, while active, is no longer a major command.) A brief organizational history and lineage of each major command, past and present, appears below.

### **Aerospace Defense Command**

The War Department established an Air Defense Command on February 26, 1940. This command, operating under the control of the First Army Commander from March 2, 1940, to September 9, 1941, engaged in planning for air defense. Before the United States entered World War II, air defense was divided among the four air districts (later, numbered air forces) based in the United States: First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces. In mid-1944, when the threat of air attack seemed negligible, this air defense organization was disbanded. Subsequently, no real air defense organization existed until the second Air Defense Command was established in 1946 as a major command of the AAF.

Established as Air Defense Command on 21 March 1946. Activated as a major command on 27 March 1946. Became an operational command of Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948.\* Discontinued on 1 July 1950. Reestablished as a major command, and organized, on 1 January 1951. Redesignated Aerospace Defense Command on 15 January 1968. Designated as a specified command on 1 July 1975. Inactivated on 31 March 1980.

The Aerospace Defense Command declined after the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve gradually assumed more and more of the air defense mission. In 1980 Air Defense Command resources were divided between Tactical Air Command and Strategic Air Command. Some functions of the command passed to the Aerospace Defense Center, a direct reporting unit.

### **Air Force Communications Command**

Air communications and air traffic control functions were combined as the Army Airways Communications System (AACS)—a function, not an organization—on November 3, 1938. Subsequently the Air Corps, and beginning in 1941 the Air Staff, directed the various field organizations

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\*On September 1, 1949, Eastern and Western Air Defense Forces, reporting directly to Continental Air Command, assumed control over U.S. air defense forces.

that provided these vital services until a separate AACS wing was established in 1943 to manage and direct the functions.

Established as Army Airways Communications System (AACS) Wing on 13 April 1943. Activated, as part of Flight Control Command, on 26 April 1943. Reassigned directly to the Army Air Forces on 14 July 1943. Redesignated Army Airways Communications System on 26 April 1944. Redesignated Air Communications Service (ACS), and reassigned to Air Transport Command, on 13 March 1946. Redesignated Airways and Air Communications Service (AACS) on 11 September 1946. Reassigned to Military Air Transport Service on 1 June 1948. Effective 1 July 1961, relieved from assignment to MATS, elevated to major command status, and redesignated Air Force Communications Service. (Was scheduled to become a technical service of Military Airlift Command on 1 July 1975, but this action was suspended.) Redesignated Air Force Communications Command on 15 November 1979.

### **Air Force Logistics Command**

Although the logistics function can be traced back to the earliest days of the Air Service, the lineal antecedents of Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) usually are not traced beyond October 15, 1926, when the Materiel Division was set up near Dayton, Ohio. The Materiel Division, controlled by the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps, possessed many characteristics of a major command. It brought together four major functions performed previously by three organizations: engineering (research and development [R&D]), procurement, supply, and maintenance. On December 11, 1941, these four functions were divided between two organizations. The Materiel Command assumed responsibility for engineering and procurement, and the Air Service Command assumed the supply and maintenance functions. Placed under AAF Material and Services in July 1944, the two commands were subsequently abolished on August 31, 1944.

Established as Army Air Forces Materiel and Services on 14 July 1944. Organized as a major command on 17 July 1944. Redesignated: Army Air Forces Technical Service Command on 31 August 1944; Air Technical Service Command on 1 July 1945; Air Materiel Command on 9 March 1946; and Air Force Logistics Command on 1 April 1961.

The engineering (R&D) function was again separated with the establishment and organization of the Research and Development Command in 1950, leaving the logistics organization responsible for procurement, supply, and maintenance.

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### **Air Force Systems Command**

Functional antecedents of Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) date at least to the establishment of the Airplane Engineering Department by the Chief Signal Officer, U.S. Army, on October 13, 1917. The department was located in the vicinity of Dayton, Ohio, where its successor, the Engineering Division, became part of the Materiel Division on October 15, 1926. Subsequently, the engineering function resided in the Materiel Command, the AAF Technical Service Command, the Air Technical Service Command, and the Air Materiel Command (see "Air Force Logistics Command") until the creation of a separate R&D command in 1950. In the reorganization and redesignation actions of 1961, Systems Command acquired the materiel procurement function from Logistics Command.

Established as Research and Development Command on 23 January 1950. Organized as a major command on 1 February 1950. Redesignated: Air Research and Development Command on 16 September 1950; Air Force Systems Command on 1 April 1961.

### **Air Proving Ground Command**

The AAF Proving Ground Command, responsible for testing aircraft weapon systems and munitions, was established in 1942 at Orlando, Florida, and moved north in 1946 to Eglin Field, Florida.\*

Established as Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics (AAFSAT) on 27 October 1942. Redesignated: AAF Tactical Center on 16 October 1943; AAF Center on 1 June 1945; AAF Proving Ground Command on 8 March 1946; Air Proving Ground Command on 10 July 1946. Effective 20 January 1948, redesignated Air Proving Ground and reassigned to Air Materiel Command, losing major command status. On 1 June 1948, reassigned to USAF and regained major command status. Redesignated Air Proving Ground Command on 20 December 1951. On 1 December 1957, redesignated Air Proving Ground Center and reassigned to Air Research and Development Command, losing major command status. Subsequently redesignated Armament Development and Test Center on 1 August 1968 and Armament Division on 1 October 1979.

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\*At Eglin in 1946, it replaced another AAF Proving Ground Command that was discontinued and disbanded. That command had been established as the Air Forces Proving Ground Command on April 10, 1942, and was redesignated AAF Proving Ground Command on November 28, 1942. Effective June 1, 1945, it became a component of the AAF Center, and was disbanded on June 30, 1946.



## **Air Training Command**

Flying training was conducted at various bases prior to, during, and following World War I. On June 28, 1922, this training was centralized in the area of San Antonio, Texas. Primary flying training took place at Brooks Field and advanced flying training at nearby Kelly Field. On August 16, 1926, an Air Corps Training Center was also established at San Antonio to supervise both primary and advanced flying training. In 1940, after the training activity expanded and more bases became available for training purposes, three regional training centers were created to supervise flying training in their respective geographical areas. The Air Corps Flying Training Command, established in January 1942, coordinated the activities of the three centers, which became subordinate components. A year later, the Technical Training Command and the Flying Training Command were merged into a general training command.

Established as Air Corps Flying Training Command on 23 January 1942.  
Redesignated: Army Air Forces Flying Training Command about 15 March 1942; Army Air Forces Training Command on 31 July 1943; Air Training Command on 1 July 1946.

## **Air University**

Because each arm of the Army possessed a special service school, the War Department approved for the Army's air arm an educational center that eventually located at Montgomery, Alabama.

Authorized as the Air Service School by the War Department on 25 February 1920, and established that same year, exact date unknown, at Langley Field, Virginia. Redesignated: Air Service Field Officers' School on 10 February 1921; Air Service Tactical School on 8 November 1922; Air Corps Tactical School on 18 August 1926. Moved to Maxwell Field, Alabama, on 15 July 1931. Discontinued on 9 October 1942. History and insignia of Air Corps Tactical School bestowed on Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics, which was established within the Army Air Forces Center at Orlando, Florida, on 16 October 1943. Redesignated AAF School on 1 June 1945. On 29 November 1945, moved to Maxwell Field, Alabama, and was assigned directly to the AAF as a major command. Redesignated Air University on 12 March 1946. Reassigned to Air Training Command on 15 May 1978, losing major command status. Returned to major command status effective 1 July 1983.

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### **Alaskan Air Command**

Military aircraft began to deploy to Alaska during the last half of 1940. To coordinate air activities there, the Alaskan Defense Command established the Air Field Forces, Alaskan Defense Command on May 29, 1941. Under authority from Western Defense Command, the Alaskan Defense Command replaced the Air Field Forces, Alaskan Defense Command, with the Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command, on October 17, 1941. Neither the Air Field Forces nor the Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command, were legitimate War Department establishments and must be classified in the same category as provisional units, although the term "provisional" was never used in connection with them. The War Department activated the Alaskan Air Force on January 15, 1942, replacing the Air Force, Alaskan Defense Command.

Established as Alaskan Air Force on 28 December 1941. Activated on 15 January 1942. Redesignated: 11th Air Force on 5 February 1942; Eleventh Air Force on 18 September 1942; Alaskan Air Command on 18 December 1945.

### **Continental Air Command**

When organized in December 1948, Continental Air Command (CONAC) assumed jurisdiction over Tactical Air Command and Air Defense Command. Continental Air Command also had charge of all Air Force reserve units because most of these forces were to be used in either air defense or tactical operations. Two years later, on December 1, 1950, the Air Force reestablished Tactical Air Command as a major command and removed it from assignment to CONAC. Air Defense Command, inactivated on July 1, 1950, was reestablished as a major command on January 1, 1951, when CONAC ceased to handle the nation's air defense mission. After January 1951, CONAC remained responsible primarily for administering the Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve (AFRES), known collectively as the Air Reserve Forces (ARF).

Established as Continental Air Command, and organized, on 1 December 1948. Inactivated on 1 August 1968. CONAC was replaced on August 1, 1968, by Air Force Reserve, a separate operating agency.

### **Electronic Security Command**

The Air Force Security Group, established under the direct command of the USAF Chief of Staff on July 1, 1948, took over functions that had

been performed within the Directorate of Intelligence, HQ USAF. The USAF Security Service replaced the group.

Established as USAF Security Service on 20 October 1948. Organized as a major command on 26 October 1948. Redesignated Electronic Security Command on 1 August 1979.

### **Headquarters Command, USAF**

Various support organizations in the vicinity of Washington, D.C., performed a variety of functions that the Bolling Field Command absorbed in December 1946.

Established as Bolling Field Command, and organized, on 15 December 1946. Redesignated Headquarters Command, USAF, on 17 March 1958. Inactivated on 1 July 1976.

When Headquarters Command, USAF, inactivated in 1976, many of its functions passed to the Military Airlift Command. In June 1978, the 1947th Administrative Support Group (later, the 1947th Headquarters Support Group) was established in the District of Columbia area to handle some of USAF's support functions.

### **Military Airlift Command**

The organization that would become widely known as the Air Transport Command\* was established in May 1941 as the Air Corps Ferrying Command, and was charged initially with flying aircraft overseas for delivery to the British. No real antecedents of this command are to be found, for until 1941 the Army's air arm had no pressing need for a major organization devoted primarily to ferrying aircraft and airlifting troops and cargo. There were squadron echelon units involved in air transport from the late 1930s and a group from 1937, but these were few in number. Most Air Corps units ferried their own aircraft and moved their own cargo.

In 1948 the Air Transport Command and the Navy Air Transport Service merged into a new organization, the Military Air Transport Service (MATS). Air Transport Command was inactivated and its resources were passed to the new command. In 1982 HQ USAF officially consolidated the Air Transport Command with the Military Airlift Command (MAC)—a

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\*Another Air Transport Command, established in April 1942, was redesignated in July 1942 the I Troop Carrier Command—a major command of the Army Air Forces. This short-lived organization trained troop carrier units and personnel throughout World War II before being disbanded on November 4, 1945.

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

new designation of Military Air Transport Service.

Established as Air Corps Ferrying Command on 29 May 1941. Redesignated: Army Air Forces Ferry Command on 9 March 1942; Army Air Forces Ferrying Command on 31 March 1942; Air Transport Command on 1 July 1942. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 June 1948. Consolidated on 13 May 1982 with Military Airlift Command (established as Military Air Transport Service, a major command, on 1 June 1948, and redesignated Military Airlift Command on 1 January 1966). Designated a specified command on 1 February 1977.

### **Northeast Air Command**

Newfoundland Base Command, a World War II organization facilitating the North Atlantic route to Europe, was part of the Eastern Defense Command (U.S. Army) until January 1, 1946, when it became a component of Atlantic Division, Air Transport Command. On April 1, 1948, Newfoundland Base Command became a directly assigned component of Air Transport Command, and on June 1, 1948, when Air Transport Command inactivated, it became a directly assigned component of Military Air Transport Service. It was elevated to major command status in 1950.

Established as Newfoundland Base Command on 15 January 1941. Redesignated Northeast Air Command on 1 October 1950. Discontinued on 1 April 1957.

When this command discontinued in 1957, its subordinate components were reassigned, most going to Air Defense Command and Strategic Air Command.

### **Pacific Air Command**

The Hawaiian Air Force was created to control the growing number of air units arriving in Hawaii in 1940.

Established as Hawaiian Air Force and activated on 1 November 1940. Redesignated: 7th Air Force on 5 February 1942; Seventh Air Force on 18 September 1942. Relieved from assignment to U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, and assigned to Army Air Forces on 1 January 1947. Redesignated Pacific Air Command on 15 December 1947. Discontinued on 31 May 1949.

Pacific Air Command was redesignated as Seventh Air Force in December 1954 and subsequently served Pacific Air Forces on two occasions: in Hawaii, 1955 to 1957, and in Southeast Asia, 1966 to 1975.

### **Pacific Air Forces**

The Far East Air Forces was created in 1944 to direct the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces in the Asiatic-Pacific theater.

Established as Far East Air Forces on 31 July 1944. Activated on 3 August 1944. Redesignated: Pacific Air Command, U.S. Army, on 6 December 1945; Far East Air Forces on 1 January 1947; Pacific Air Forces on 1 July 1957.

### **Space Command**

An increasing number of unmanned military satellite projects reached maturity in the 1970s and 1980s. To manage these complex projects, some of which made possible verification of the arms control and nuclear test ban treaties, and to operate the military space shuttle designed to place new satellites in orbit, HQ USAF established in 1982 an operational space command. The new command assumed space-related functions from Strategic and Tactical Air Commands. It became the Air Force component of the specified Aerospace Defense Command, which inactivated as a major command of the USAF in 1980 but continued to exist as a Department of Defense organization, and as part of the combined North American Air Defense Command.

Established as Space Command, and activated, on 1 September 1982.

### **Special Weapons Command**

The Special Weapons Command was created to direct the specialized organizations dealing with atomic and other unconventional weapons. Because much of the work involved research and development, the command was eventually absorbed by the Air Research and Development Command (now the Air Force Systems Command).

Established as Special Weapons Command, a major command, on 1 December 1949. Redesignated Air Force Special Weapons Center, and assigned to Air Research and Development Command, on 1 April 1952, losing major command status at that time. Inactivated on 1 April 1976.

### **Strategic Air Command**

The Continental Air Forces, created in December 1944, coordinated the activities of the four numbered air forces in the United States (First, Second, Third, and Fourth). Strategic bombardment operations during World

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War II, however, had shown the need for a major command devoted exclusively to strategic, long-range air combat operations, and that became the command's assigned mission in 1946.

Established as Continental Air Forces on 13 December 1944. Activated on 15 December 1944. Redesignated Strategic Air Command on 21 March 1946. Designated a specified command on 14 December 1946.

### **Tactical Air Command**

HQ USAF established this command to provide a balance between strategic, air defense, and tactical forces of the post-World War II Air Force. In 1948 the Continental Air Command assumed control over air defense, tactical air, and air reserve forces. After two years in a subordinate role, Tactical Air Command (TAC) was reestablished as a major command.

Established as Tactical Air Command, and activated, on 21 March 1946. Reduced from major command status, and assigned to Continental Air Command as an operational command, on 1 December 1948. Involved primarily in Air Reserve training programs and field exercises. On 20 September 1950, TAC became an operational and an administrative command under Continental Air Command, and on 1 December 1950, returned to major command status.

### **3d Air Division**

During 3d Air Division's status as a major command, 1949–1951, it controlled large numbers of USAF organizations based in the United Kingdom and supervised a tremendous airfield construction program. In June 1954, the division became a part of Strategic Air Command based in the Pacific.

Established as 3d Bombardment Division on 30 August 1943. Activated on 13 September 1943 as a component of Eighth Air Force. Redesignated 3d Air Division on 1 January 1945. Inactivated on 21 November 1945. Organized on 23 August 1948 as a component of U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE). Reassigned from USAFE on 3 January 1949 and given major command status. This special status terminated on 21 January 1951, at which time 3d Air Division returned to the control of U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Discontinued on 1 May 1951. Redesignated 3d Air Division (Operational) on 8 October 1953 and activated on 25 October 1953, assigned to U.S. Air Forces in Europe. Inactivated on 1 March 1954. Redesignated 3d Air Division on 8 June 1954 and activated on 18 June 1954, assigned to Strategic Air Command. Inactivated on 1 April 1970. Activated on 1 January 1975, assigned to Strategic Air Command.

### **United States Air Forces in Europe**

Beginning as the World War II Eighth Air Force, this command evolved into a USAF major command.

Established as 8th Air Force on 19 January 1942. Activated on 28 January 1942. Redesignated: Eighth Air Force on 18 September 1942; United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe on 22 February 1944; United States Air Forces in Europe on 7 August 1945. Was a specified command of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 22 January 1951 to 1 July 1956.

### **United States Air Forces Southern Command**

The first air units arrived in the Canal Zone in February 1917. By 1940, because a rapid increase in the number of units warranted a new organization, the Panama Canal Air Force was created.

Established as Panama Canal Air Force on 19 October 1940. Activated as a major command on 20 November 1940. Redesignated: Caribbean Air Force on 5 August 1941; 6th Air Force on 5 February 1942; Sixth Air Force on 18 September 1942; Caribbean Air Command on 31 July 1946; United States Air Forces Southern Command on 8 July 1963. Inactivated on 1 January 1976.

When the command inactivated in 1976, most of its functions and resources passed to the Tactical Air Command which established an air division as the major air organization in the area.

### **Separate Operating Agencies**

In 1950 the Air Force established its first separate operating agency (SOA) with the status and responsibilities of a major command, but controlled directly by USAF staff agencies. A total of 26 separate operating agencies have been established; two of these, the Air Force Reserve and the USAF Academy, became direct reporting units in 1978. The Air Force Reserve returned to SOA status on May 1, 1983.

### **Aeronautical Chart and Information Center**

Organized as 36th Army Air Forces Base Unit (Aeronautical Chart Service), and assigned to Army Air Forces, on 1 January 1945. Assigned to Air Transport Command in April 1946 and to Strategic Air Command on 21 May 1947. Redesignated: 36th Air Force Base Unit (HQ, Aeronautical Chart Service) on 26 September 1947; and Headquarters,

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

Aeronautical Chart Service, on 1 August 1948. Relieved from assignment to Strategic Air Command and assigned to Air Materiel Command on 1 March 1950. Redesignated: HQ and HQ Squadron, USAF Aeronautical Chart and Information Service, on 1 February 1951; HQ, USAF Aeronautical Chart and Information Service, on 21 May 1951. Relieved from assignment to Air Materiel Command and assigned to Military Air Transport Service on 11 May 1952. Redesignated: USAF Aeronautical Chart and Information Center on 1 August 1952; Aeronautical Chart and Information Center on 20 September 1954; HQ, Aeronautical Chart and Information Center on 8 September 1958. Relieved from assignment to MATS and given status as a separate operating agency on 1 July 1960, with procedural functions of a major command. Inactivated on 30 June 1972.

Upon inactivation in 1972, the Aeronautical Chart and Information Center's mission and functions became part of the Defense Mapping Agency, a component of the Department of Defense.

### **Air Engineering Development Division**

This was the Air Force's first separate operating agency.

Established as Air Engineering Development Division, with status of a separate operating agency directly controlled by HQ USAF, on 1 January 1950. Reassigned to Air Research and Development Command on 1 May 1951, losing SOA status. Redesignated Arnold Engineering Development Center on 3 August 1951.

### **Air Force Accounting and Finance Center**

Established as Air Force Finance Division, and organized as a separate operating agency, on 1 January 1951. Redesignated: Air Force Accounting and Finance Division on 1 September 1957; Air Force Accounting and Finance Center on 1 July 1959.

### **Air Force Audit Agency**

Established as Air Force Audit Agency, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 31 December 1971.

### **Air Force Commissary Service**

Established as Air Force Commissary Service, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 January 1976. Reassigned as a subordinate unit of the Air Force Engineering and Services Agency (later, Center) on 8 April 1977, losing SOA status. Returned to separate operating agency status, and reassigned directly to USAF, on 1 December 1978.



### **Air Force Data Automation Agency**

Established as Air Force Data Automation Agency, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 29 February 1972. Inactivated on 30 June 1978.

### **Air Force Data Systems Design Center**

Established as Air Force Data Systems Design Center, and organized as a separate operating agency, on 26 October 1967. Reassigned to Air Force Data Automation Agency on 29 February 1972, losing SOA status. Reassigned on 30 June 1978 to Air Force Communications Service (later, Command). Redesignated Data Systems Design Office and assigned to the Air Force Teleprocessing Center of AFCC on 8 May 1984.

### **Air Force Engineering and Services Center**

Established as Air Force Engineering and Services Agency, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 8 April 1977. Redesignated Air Force Engineering and Services Center on 30 June 1978.

### **Air Force Inspection and Safety Center**

Established as Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 31 December 1971.

### **Air Force Inspector General Activities Center**

Established as Air Force Inspector General Activities Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 June 1978. Inactivated on 1 September 1979.

### **Air Force Intelligence Service**

Established as Air Force Intelligence Service, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 27 June 1972.

### **Air Force Legal Services Center**

Established as Air Force Legal Services Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 July 1978.

### **Air Force Management Engineering Agency**

Established as Air Force Management Engineering Agency, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 November 1975. Reassigned to the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center on 30 June 1978, losing SOA status.

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### **Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center**

Established as Air Force Military Personnel Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 31 December 1971. Redesignated Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center on 30 June 1978.

### **Air Force Medical Service Center**

Established as Air Force Medical Service Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 July 1978.

### **Air Force Office of Security Police**

Established as Air Force Office of Security Police, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 September 1979.

### **Air Force Office of Special Investigations**

Established as Air Force Office of Special Investigations, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 31 December 1971.

### **Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center**

Established as Air Force Test and Evaluation Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 January 1974. Redesignated Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center on 4 April 1983.

### **Air Force Reserve**

The Air Force Reserve was created as an SOA and replaced a major command—Continental Air Command—which inactivated August 1, 1968. Because of the large number of organizations under its control, Air Force Reserve became the largest of the separate operating agencies and was the largest of the direct reporting units before returning to SOA status.

Established as Air Force Reserve, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 21 June 1968. Organized on 1 August 1968. Status changed from that of an SOA to that of a direct reporting unit on 1 July 1978. Returned to SOA status on 1 May 1983.

### **Air Force Service Information and News Center**

Established as Air Force Service Information and News Center, and activated as a separate operating agency, on 1 June 1978.

### **Air Pictorial Service**

Established as Air Pictorial Service on 1 April 1951. Organized as a

separate operating agency and given procedural functions of a major command. Redesignated Air Photographic and Charting Service, and concurrently reassigned to Military Air Transport Service, on 16 April 1952, losing SOA status. Redesignated Aerospace Audio-Visual Service on 1 January 1966 and Aerospace Audiovisual Service on 1 May 1981.

### **Air Reserve Personnel Center**

Established as Air Reserve Records Center on 30 November 1956. Activated on 1 January 1957, assigned to Continental Air Command. Redesignated Air Reserve Personnel Center on 1 September 1965. With the inactivation of CONAC on 1 August 1968, was given status as a separate operating agency. Reassigned to Air Force Reserve on 1 July 1978, losing SOA status. Returned to SOA status on 1 May 1983.

### **Long Range Proving Ground Division**

Established as Air Force Division, Joint Long Range Proving Ground, on 1 October 1949, and assigned to Headquarters Command, USAF. Reassigned directly to USAF, and redesignated Long Range Proving Ground Division, on 16 May 1950, gaining SOA status. Reassigned to Air Research and Development Command on 14 May 1951, losing SOA status. Redesignated Air Force Missile Test Center on 30 June 1951 and Air Force Eastern Test Range on 15 May 1964. Inactivated on 1 February 1977. Redesignated Eastern Space and Missile Center, and activated on 1 October 1979, assigned to the Space and Missile Organization, Air Force Systems Command.

### **Office of Aerospace Research**

Established as Air Force Research Division, a component of Air Research and Development Command, on 15 January 1960. On 1 April 1961, the division was assigned to USAF, redesignated Office of Aerospace Research, and given status as a separate operating agency. Reassigned to Air Force Systems Command on 1 July 1970 and concurrently inactivated.

### **Sixteenth Air Force**

Established as Joint United States Military Group, Air Administration (Spain), a separate operating agency, on 20 May 1954. Redesignated Sixteenth Air Force on 15 July 1956. Reassigned to Strategic Air Command on 1 July 1957, losing SOA status. Assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe on 15 April 1966.

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### **Direct Reporting Units**

A direct reporting unit (DRU) has a specialized and restricted mission. The heads of direct reporting units report directly to the Chief of Staff, USAF, or to his representative on the Air Staff. In 1978, HQ USAF converted two former separate operating agencies, the Air Force Reserve and the USAF Academy, to direct reporting units. (On May 1, 1983, the Air Force Reserve returned to separate operating agency status.) The other seven direct reporting units (DRUs) feature very specialized functions and have no prior existence as USAF organizations.

#### **Aerospace Defense Center**

This direct reporting unit was brought into being to assume residual functions of the Aerospace Defense Command, then in the process of being discontinued as a major command.

Established as Aerospace Defense Center, a direct reporting unit, on 18 October 1979. Activated on 1 December 1979. Assigned to Space Command on 1 September 1982, losing DRU status.

#### **Air Force Combat Operations Staff**

Established as Air Force Combat Operations Staff on 28 November 1978. Activated as a direct reporting unit on 1 December 1978.

#### **Air Force Review Boards Office**

Established as Air Force Review Boards Office, and activated as a direct reporting unit, on 1 September 1982.

#### **Air Force Technical Applications Center**

Established as 1035th USAF Field Activities Group, and organized, on 7 July 1959. Redesignated 1035th Technical Operations Group on 26 June 1972. Redesignated Air Force Technical Applications Center, and given status as a direct reporting unit, on 1 October 1980.

#### **Air National Guard Support Center**

Established as Air National Guard Support Center on 10 May 1979. Activated as a direct reporting unit on 1 June 1979.

#### **United States Air Force Academy**

Established as United States Air Force Academy on 27 July 1954. Ac-

tivated as a separate operating agency on 14 August 1954. Status changed from that of an SOA to that of a direct reporting unit on 1 September 1978.

### **United States Air Force Historical Research Center**

Established as Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center on 25 May 1979. Activated as a direct reporting unit on 1 July 1979, replacing a named activity (a function, not a unit) of the same designation, formed in May 1972. Redesignated United States Air Force Historical Research Center on 1 December 1983.

### **1947th Headquarters Support Group**

Established as 1947th Administrative Support Group on 21 June 1978. Activated as a direct reporting unit on 30 June 1978. Redesignated 1947th Headquarters Support Group on 1 August 1983.

## **Numbered Air Forces**

Numbered air forces, first established during World War II as part of the Army Air Forces, had originally the status of major commands. Within the United States Air Force since 1947, numbered air forces, with one brief exception (Sixteenth Air Force), have been subordinate to named commands. Generally, numbered air forces are assigned to operational commands and control tactical and strategic forces, including divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons.

### **First Air Force**

One of the original four numbered air forces formed in the United States, the First Air Force provided air defense and conducted combat training for personnel of newly formed units. Following World War II this air force was involved in air defense and reserve training, and in the 1960s concentrated entirely upon air defense.

Established as Northeast Air District on 19 October 1940. Activated on 18 December 1940 at Mitchel Field, New York, assigned to Northeast (later, Eastern) Defense Command, U.S. Army. Redesignated 1st Air Force on 9 April 1941 and First Air Force on 18 September 1942. Assigned to Army Air Forces on 17 September 1943, to Continental Air Forces on 16 April 1945, and to Air Defense Command on 21 March 1946. Moved to Fort Slocum (later, Slocum AFB), New York, on 3 June 1946. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948.

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

Moved to Mitchel AFB, New York, on 17 October 1949. Discontinued on 23 June 1958. Activated on 20 January 1966, assigned to Air (later, Aerospace) Defense Command, organized on 1 April 1966 at Stewart AFB, New York. Inactivated on 31 December 1969.

### **Second Air Force**

Formed in the United States to provide air defense and train personnel of newly formed units in World War II, the Second was briefly a part of Air Defense Command after the war. From 1949 to 1975, as part of Strategic Air Command, it engaged in training for strategic warfare.

Established as Northwest Air District on 19 October 1940. Activated on 18 December 1940 at McChord Field, Washington, initially assigned to Central Defense Command, U.S. Army, and later to Western Defense Command, U.S. Army. Moved to Fort George Wright, Washington, on 9 January 1941. Redesignated 2d Air Force on 9 April 1941, and Second Air Force on 18 September 1942. Moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado, 13 June 1943. Assigned to Army Air Forces in September 1943, and to Continental Air Forces (later, Strategic Air Command), on 16 April 1945. Inactivated on 30 March 1946. Activated on 6 June 1946 at Fort Crook, Nebraska, assigned to Air Defense Command. Inactivated on 1 July 1948. Activated on 1 November 1949 at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, assigned to Strategic Air Command. Inactivated on 16 September 1950 and organized the same day with no change in station or assignment. Inactivated on 1 January 1975.

### **Third Air Force**

Third Air Force also provided air defense and conducted combat training for personnel of newly formed units in World War II. After the war it served Tactical Air Command, then inactivated. The Third Air Force returned to active service in 1951 as one of the tactical air forces of United States Air Forces in Europe.

Established as Southeast Air District on 19 October 1940. Activated on 18 December 1940 at MacDill Field, Florida, assigned to Southern Defense Command, U.S. Army. Moved to Tampa, Florida, in January 1941. Redesignated 3d Air Force on 9 April 1941, and Third Air Force on 18 September 1942. Assigned to Army Air Forces about September 1943 and to Continental Air Forces on 16 April 1945. Moved to Greenville Army Air Base, South Carolina, and assigned to Tactical Air Command on 21 March 1946. Inactivated on 1 November 1946. Organized on 1 May 1951 at Victoria Park Estate (later, U.S. Air Base, South Ruislip;

South Ruislip Air Station), England, assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe. Moved to RAF Mildenhall, England, on 15 April 1972.

### **Fourth Air Force (Reserve)**

Formed in the United States during World War II to provide air defense and combat training for the personnel of newly formed units, the Fourth Air Force was assigned, in turn, to Continental Air Forces, Air Defense Command, and Continental Air Command before inactivating in 1960. The Fourth Air Force served in the air defense program, 1966–1969, and became part of the Reserve program in 1976.

Established as Southwest Air District on 19 October 1940. Activated on 18 December 1940 at March Field, California, initially assigned to General Headquarters Air Force then to Western Defense Command, U.S. Army. Moved to Riverside, California, on 20 January 1941. Redesignated 4th Air Force on 9 April 1941. Moved to Hamilton Field, California, on 7 December 1941, and to San Francisco, California, on 5 January 1942. Redesignated Fourth Air Force on 18 September 1942. Assigned to Army Air Forces on 16 September 1943, to Continental Air Forces on 16 April 1945, and to Air Defense Command on 21 March 1946. Moved to Hamilton Field (later, AFB), California, on 19 June 1946. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 September 1960. Activated on 20 January 1966, assigned to Air (later, Aerospace) Defense Command. Organized on 1 April 1966 at Hamilton AFB, California. Inactivated on 30 September 1969. Redesignated Fourth Air Force (Reserve) on 24 September 1976. Activated in the Reserve on 8 October 1976 at McClellan AFB, California, assigned to Air Force Reserve.

### **Fifth Air Force**

One of the few numbered air forces never stationed in the United States, Fifth Air Force is also one of the oldest, continuously active numbered air forces.\*

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\*Not to be confused with a second "Fifth" air force created as a temporary establishment to handle combat operations after the outbreak of hostilities on June 25, 1950, in Korea. This numbered air force was established as Fifth Air Force, Advance, and organized at Itazuki AB, Japan, assigned to Fifth Air Force, on July 14, 1950. It moved to Taegu AB, South Korea, on July 24, 1950, and was redesignated Fifth Air Force in Korea at the same time. After moving, it apparently received command control from Far East Air Forces. The establishment operated from Pusan, Taegu, and Seoul before being discontinued on December 1, 1950.

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

Established as Philippine Department Air Force on 16 August 1941. Activated on 20 September 1941 at Nichols Field, Philippine Islands, assigned to the Philippine Department, U.S. Army. Redesignated Far East Air Force on 28 October 1941. Moved to Darwin, Australia, in December 1941, following the Japanese attacks in the Philippines.\* Redesignated 5th Air Force on 5 February 1942. Moved to Brisbane, Australia, 3 September 1942. Redesignated Fifth Air Force on 18 September 1942. Assigned to Southwest Pacific Area in November 1942. Moved to Nadzab, New Guinea, on 15 June 1944, and assigned to Far East Air Forces (later, Pacific Air Command, U.S. Army; Far East Air Forces; Pacific Air Forces). Moved to Owi, Schouten Islands, New Guinea, 10 August 1944; to Leyte, Philippine Islands, about 20 November 1944; to Mindoro, Philippine Islands, January 1945; to Clark Field, Luzon, Philippine Islands, April 1945; to Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, Japan, 31 July 1945; to Irumagawa, Japan, about 25 September 1945; to Tokyo, Japan, 13 January 1946; to Nagoya (later, Nagoya AB), Japan, 20 May 1946; to Seoul, South Korea, 1 December 1950; to Taegu AB, South Korea, 22 December 1950; to Seoul, South Korea, 15 June 1951; to Osan-ni, South Korea, 25 January 1954; to Nagoya AB (later, Nagoya AS; Moriyama AS), Japan, 1 September 1954; to Fuchu AS, Japan, 1 July 1957; and to Yokota AB, Japan, 11 November 1974.

### **Sixth Air Force**

See: United States Air Forces Southern Command.

### **Seventh Air Force**

Seventh Air Force evolved from the Hawaiian Air Force that was originally established to control a growing number of air units arriving in the Territory of Hawaii in 1940. Following World War II it was briefly a named command (see Pacific Air Command) before inactivating. HQ USAF revived the Seventh Air Force during the conflict in Southeast Asia as a replacement for the 2d Air Division.

Established as Hawaiian Air Force on 19 October 1940. Activated on 1 November 1940 at Fort Shafter, Territory of Hawaii, assigned to Hawaiian Department, U.S. Army. Moved to Hickam Field, Territory of Hawaii, about 12 July 1941. Redesignated 7th Air Force on 5 February

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\*Lost most of its men and equipment in the Philippines. In December 1941 and January 1942, headquarters and some men and airplanes moved to Australia, and subsequently to Java to help stem the Japanese advance. The headquarters was remanned in September 1942 and assumed control of AAF organizations in Australia and New Guinea.



1942 and Seventh Air Force on 18 September 1942. Became part of U.S. Army Forces, Central Pacific Area, about 16 August 1943, and assigned to Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, on 1 August 1944. Moved to Saipan, Mariana Islands, on 13 December 1944. Moved to Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, Japan and assigned to Far East Air Forces (later, Pacific Air Command, U.S. Army), on 14 July 1945. Moved without personnel or equipment to Hickam Field, Territory of Hawaii, on 1 January 1946. Assigned to Army Air Forces on 1 January 1947. Redesignated Pacific Air Command on 15 December 1947. Discontinued on 1 June 1949. Redesignated Seventh Air Force on 10 December 1954. Activated at Hickam AFB, Territory of Hawaii, on 5 January 1955, assigned to Pacific Air Force (later, Pacific Air Force/FEAF [Rear]). Moved to Wheeler AFB, Territory of Hawaii, on 24 March 1955. Inactivated on 1 July 1957. Activated on 28 March 1966. Organized on 1 April 1966 at Tan Son Nhut Airfield, South Vietnam. Moved to Nakhon Phanom Airport, Thailand, on 29 March 1973. Inactivated on 30 June 1975.

### **Eighth Air Force**

The initial Eighth Air Force became the United States Air Forces in Europe (see USAFE, p.21). The present Eighth Air Force began its existence as VIII Bomber Command. It engaged in combat in the European Theater of Operations during World War II and moved to the Pacific Theater in the final months of the war. Eighth Air Force served Strategic Air Command after the war, both in the United States and overseas.

Established as VIII Bomber Command on 19 January 1942. Activated on 1 February 1942 at Langley Field, Virginia, assigned to Air Force Combat Command. Moved to Savannah AB, Georgia, about 10 February 1942. Moved to Daws Hill, England, on 23 February 1942, joining Eighth Air Force (later, United States Strategic Air Forces [USSTAF]). Moved to High Wycombe, England, on 15 May 1942. Redesignated Eighth Air Force on 22 February 1944, when the original Eighth Air Force became USSTAF. Moved without personnel or equipment to Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, on 16 July 1945, assigned to U.S. Army Strategic Air Forces. Moved without personnel or equipment to MacDill Field, Florida, on 7 June 1946, joining Strategic Air Command. Moved to Fort Worth Army Airfield (later, Griffiss AFB [briefly]; Carswell AFB), Texas, on 1 November 1946. Moved to Westover AFB, Massachusetts, on 13 June 1955. Moved without personnel or equipment to Andersen AFB, Guam, on 1 April 1970, absorbing resources of 3d Air Division. Moved without personnel or equipment to Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, on 1 January 1975, absorbing resources of Second Air Force.

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

### **Ninth Air Force**

After beginning life as a numbered air support command, this establishment became the major tactical air force in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. Ninth Air Force first entered combat in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, then moved to England in 1943. Following the war, Ninth Air Force served as one of the tactical air forces of Tactical Air Command.

Established as 5th Air Support Command on 21 August 1941. Activated on 2 September 1941 at Bowman Field, Kentucky, assigned to Air Force Combat Command. Moved to New Orleans Army Air Base, Louisiana, on 24 January 1942. Redesignated 9th Air Force on 8 April 1942. Moved to Bolling Field, D.C., on 22 July 1942. Redesignated Ninth Air Force on 18 September 1942. Moved to Egypt on 12 November 1942, assigned to Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Moved to England on 16 October 1943, assigned to European Theater of Operations. Became part of United States Strategic Air Forces (later, United States Air Forces in Europe) in June 1944. Moved to France on 15 September 1944 and to Germany on 6 June 1945. Inactivated on 2 December 1945. Activated on 28 March 1946 at Biggs Field, Texas, assigned to Tactical Air Command. Moved to Greenville Army Air Base (later, AFB), South Carolina, on 31 October 1946. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948. Moved to Langley AFB, Virginia, on 14 February 1949, and to Pope AFB, North Carolina, on 1 August 1950. Redesignated Ninth Air Force (Tactical) on 1 August 1950. Assigned to Tactical Air Command on 1 December 1950. Redesignated Ninth Air Force on 26 June 1951. Moved to Shaw AFB, South Carolina, on 20 August 1954.

### **Tenth Air Force (Reserve)**

The Tenth Air Force (Reserve) was created for air combat operations in India and Burma during World War II. In the years following the War the Tenth Air Force served the air defense and reserve training programs.

Established as 10th Air Force on 4 February 1942. Activated on 12 February 1942 at Patterson Field, Ohio, assigned to Air Force Combat Command. Moved to New Delhi, India, on 5 March 1942 and assigned to U.S. Army Forces in China-Burma-India. Redesignated Tenth Air Force on 18 September 1942. Assigned to Army Air Forces, India-Burma Sector, on 21 August 1943. Moved to Barrackpore, India, on 16 October 1943; to Belvedere Palace, Calcutta, India, on 8 January 1944; to Kanjikoah, India, on 20 June 1944. Assigned to Army Air Forces, India-Burma Theater, on 27 October 1944. Moved to Myitkyina, Burma, on

Official Emblems  
of USAF Organizations  
as of 1983



# Major Commands





















# Separate Operating Agencies





















## Direct Reporting Units







# Air Forces





















2 November 1944; Bhamo, Burma, on 7 February 1945; Piardoba, India, on 15 May 1945; and Kunming, China, on 23 June 1945. Assigned to Army Air Forces, China Theater, on 6 July 1945. Moved to Liuchow, China, 9 August 1945; Kunming, China, 25 August 1945; Shanghai, China, 18 October 1945; and Fort Lawton, Washington, 5 January 1946. Inactivated on 6 January 1946. Activated on 24 May 1946 at Brooks Field (later, AFB), Texas, assigned Air Defense Command. Moved to Offutt AFB, Nebraska, 1 July 1948; Fort Benjamin Harrison (later, Benjamin Harrison AFB), Indiana, 25 September 1948. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948. Moved to Selfridge AFB, Michigan, 16 January 1950. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 September 1960. Activated on 20 January 1966, assigned to Air (later, Aerospace) Defense Command. Organized on 1 April 1966 at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri. Inactivated on 31 December 1969. Redesignated Tenth Air Force (Reserve) on 24 September 1976. Activated in the Reserve on 8 October 1976 at Bergstrom AFB, Texas, assigned to Air Force Reserve.

### **Eleventh Air Force**

The initial Eleventh Air Force became the Alaskan Air Command (See AAC, p.16). The present Eleventh Air Force existed for a short time after World War II, primarily as a Reserve training establishment.

Established as Eleventh Air Force on 13 May 1946. Activated on 13 June 1946 at Olmsted Field, Pennsylvania, assigned to Air Defense Command. Inactivated on 1 July 1948.

### **Twelfth Air Force**

Established in the United States, the Twelfth Air Force moved to England for training and participated in the invasion of North Africa. It engaged in tactical operations for the remainder of the war in the Mediterranean. The Twelfth Air Force has subsequently served both in the United States and in Europe.

Established as Twelfth Air Force, and activated, on 20 August 1942 at Bolling Field, D.C., assigned to Army Air Forces. Moved to England on 12 September 1942, attached to Eighth Air Force. Moved to Algeria on 9 November 1942, assigned to Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Moved to Tunisia on 10 August 1943 and to Italy on 5 December 1943. Inactivated at Florence, Italy, on 31 August 1945. Activated on 17 May 1946 at March Field, California, assigned to Tactical Air Command. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948. Moved to Brooks AFB, Texas, on 21 January 1949. Discontinued on 1 July 1950. Organized on 21 January 1951 at Wiesbaden, Germany, assigned to United

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

States Air Forces in Europe. Moved to Ramstein (later, Ramstein AB), Germany, on 27 April 1953. Moved without personnel or equipment to Waco, Texas, on 1 January 1958, absorbing resources of Eighteenth Air Force. Assigned to Tactical Air Command. Moved to Bergstrom AFB, Texas, on 30 August 1968.

### **Thirteenth Air Force**

Like the Fifth Air Force, the Thirteenth Air Force has never been stationed in the United States; it is also one of the oldest, continuously active numbered air forces. Since World War II it has provided air defense in the Far East, primarily the Philippines, although it operated for a short period (1948–1949) in the Ryukyu Islands. Numerous Thirteenth Air Force organizations participated in Southeast Asia combat operations in the 1960s and 1970s.

Established as Thirteenth Air Force on 14 December 1942. Activated on 13 January 1943 on New Caledonia Islands. Moved to Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides on 21 January 1943 as part of U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. Moved to Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, on 13 January 1944, and to Los Negros Island, Admiralty Islands, on 15 June 1944. Assigned to Far East Air Forces on 15 June 1944. Moved to Hollandia, New Guinea, 13 September 1944; Noemfoor Island, Schouten Islands, New Guinea, 23 September 1944; Morotai, Moluccas Islands, Indonesia, 29 October 1944; Leyte, Philippine Islands, 1 March 1945; Clark Field, Luzon, Philippine Islands, about 1 January 1946; Fort William McKinley, Luzon, Philippine Islands, 20 May 1946; Clark Field (later, AFB), Luzon, Philippine Islands, 15 August 1947; Kadena AB, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, Japan, 1 December 1948 (without personnel or equipment); and Clark AFB (later, AB), Philippine Islands, 16 May 1949. Assigned to Pacific Air Force (later, Pacific Air Force/FEAF [Rear]), 17 May 1955. Assigned to Pacific Air Forces, 1 July 1957.

### **Fourteenth Air Force (Reserve)**

Fourteenth Air Force operated primarily in China during World War II, and subsequently served Air Defense Command, Continental Air Command, and the Air Force Reserve.

Established as Fourteenth Air Force on 5 March 1943. Activated on 10 March 1943 at Kunming, China, assigned to U.S. Army Forces, China-Burma-India Theater. Assigned to U.S. Forces, China Theater, about 24 October 1944. Moved to Peishiyi, China, on 7 August 1945 and to Fort Lawton, Washington, on 5 January 1946. Inactivated on 6 January 1946. Activated on 24 May 1946 at Orlando Army Air Base (later, AFB),

Florida, assigned to Air Defense Command. Assigned to Continental Air Command on 1 December 1948. Moved to Robins AFB, Georgia, on 28 October 1949. Inactivated on 1 September 1960. Activated on 20 January 1966, assigned to Air (later, Aerospace) Defense Command. Organized on 1 April 1966 at Gunter AFB, Alabama. Moved without personnel or equipment to Colorado Springs, Colorado, on 1 July 1968, absorbing resources of 9th Aerospace Defense Division. Redesignated Fourteenth Aerospace Force on 1 July 1968. Inactivated on 1 October 1976. Redesignated Fourteenth Air Force (Reserve), and activated in the Reserve on 8 October 1976, at Dobbins AFB, Georgia, assigned to Air Force Reserve.

### **Fifteenth Air Force**

World War II was well underway when the Fifteenth Air Force was established in the Mediterranean theater as a strategic air force. The new air force drew its operational forces from existing air forces in the European and Mediterranean theaters, and commenced combat operations the day after it was formed. In the postwar years it became one of Strategic Air Command's primary numbered air forces.

Established as Fifteenth Air Force on 30 October 1943. Activated on 1 November 1943 at Tunis, Tunisia, assigned to Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Moved to Bari, Italy, on 1 December 1943. Became part of United States Strategic Air Forces about February 1944. Inactivated on 15 September 1945. Activated on 31 March 1946 at Colorado Springs, Colorado, assigned to Strategic Air Command. Moved to March AFB, California, on 7 November 1949.

### **Sixteenth Air Force**

Originated as a separate operating agency, this postwar numbered air force served both Strategic Air Command and United States Air Forces in Europe.

Established as Joint United States Military Group, Air Administration (Spain), on 20 May 1954. Activated on 20 May 1954 at Madrid, Spain, as a Separate Operating Agency of the United States Air Force. Redesignated Sixteenth Air Force on 15 July 1956. Assigned to Strategic Air Command on 1 July 1957, losing SOA status. Moved to Torrejon AB, Spain, on 1 February 1958. Assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe on 15 April 1966.

### **Seventeenth Air Force**

Seventeenth Air Force, another postwar numbered air force, served United States Air Forces in Europe after its establishment in 1953.



## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

Established as Seventeenth Air Force on 17 April 1953. Organized on 25 April 1953 at Rabat-Sale, French Morocco (later, Morocco), assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe. Moved to Wheelus AB, Libya, on 1 August 1956. Moved without personnel or equipment to Ramstein AB, West Germany, on 15 November 1959, and remanned. Moved to Sembach AB, West Germany on 5 October 1972.

### **Eighteenth Air Force**

Extensive troop carrier operations within Tactical Air Command called for some intermediate echelon of command, and HQ USAF created a new numbered air force for this purpose in March 1951. Later, Eighteenth Air Force received other combat units in addition to troop carrier wings. Twelfth Air Force absorbed all of its resources on January 1, 1958.

Established as Eighteenth Air Force (Troop Carrier) on 7 March 1951. Organized on 28 March 1951 at Donaldson AFB, South Carolina, assigned to Tactical Air Command. Redesignated Eighteenth Air Force on 26 June 1951. Moved to Waco, Texas, on 1 September 1957. Inactivated on 1 January 1958.

### **Nineteenth Air Force**

Formed after World War II, during its years of active service the Nineteenth Air Force served Tactical Air Command.

Established as Nineteenth Air Force on 1 July 1955. Activated on 8 July 1955 at Foster AFB, Texas, assigned to Tactical Air Command. Moved to Seymour Johnson AFB, North Carolina, on 1 September 1958. Inactivated on 2 July 1973.

### **Twentieth Air Force**

Twentieth Air Force was formed exclusively as a heavy strategic bombardment organization. Headquartered in the United States (under command of Gen. Henry H. Arnold, with direction from the Joint Chiefs of Staff), its B-29 components operated in the China-Burma-India and Pacific theaters, carrying the air war to the Japanese. Operations climaxed with atomic attacks on Japan in August 1945. Following the war, Twentieth Air Force remained in the Pacific and served in combat for a short time during the Korean war. Later it was involved primarily in air defense of the Ryukyu Islands.

Established as Twentieth Air Force on 4 April 1944. Activated on 4 April 1944 at Washington, D.C., assigned to Army Air Forces. Moved to Har-

mon Field, Guam, Mariana Islands, on 16 July 1945 and assigned to U.S. Army Strategic Air Forces. Assigned to Pacific Air Command, U.S. Army, (later, Far East Air Forces), on 6 December 1945. Moved to Kadena AB, Ryukyu Islands, Japan, on 16 May 1949. Inactivated on 1 March 1955.

### **Twenty-First Air Force**

Created as a wing during World War II, this establishment gradually evolved into its modern designation over a number of years while serving the same major command.

Established as 23d Army Air Forces (AAF) Ferrying Wing on 12 June 1942. Activated on 18 June 1942 at Presque Isle, Maine, assigned to AAF Ferrying Command (later, Air Transport Command). Redesignated North Atlantic Wing, Air Transport Command, on 11 February 1944. Redesignated North Atlantic Division, Air Transport Command, on 27 June 1944. Moved to Fort Totten, New York, and redesignated Atlantic Division, Air Transport Command, on 20 September 1945. Attached to Air Transport Service (Provisional), 5 September to 14 Oct 1947. Assigned to Air Transport Service on 15 October 1947. Moved to Westover Field (later, AFB), Massachusetts, on 24 October 1947. Redesignated Atlantic Division, Military Air Transport Service (later, Military Airlift Command), on 1 June 1948. Moved to McGuire AFB, New Jersey, on 1 June 1955. Redesignated Eastern Transport Air Force on 1 July 1958, and Twenty-First Air Force on 8 January 1966.

### **Twenty-Second Air Force**

This numbered air force can trace its origins to World War II through an official consolidation of two organizations in 1979. Like the Twenty-First Air Force, the Twenty-Second has also continuously served the same major command.

Established as Domestic Division, Air Corps Ferrying Command, and activated, on 28 December 1941 in Washington, D.C., assigned to Air Corps Ferrying Command. Redesignated: Domestic Wing, Air Corps Ferrying Command, on 26 February 1942; Domestic Wing, Army Air Forces Ferry Command, on 9 March 1942; Domestic Wing, Army Air Forces Ferrying Command, on 31 March 1942; Ferrying Division, Air Transport Command, on 20 June 1942. Moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, on 10 February 1943. Redesignated Continental Division, Air Transport Command, on 28 February 1946. Discontinued on 31 October 1946. Consolidated on 29 March 1979 with the organization established as Con-

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

tinental Division, Military Air Transport Service, and organized at Kelly AFB, Texas, on 1 July 1948, assigned to Military Air Transport Service (later, Military Airlift Command); moved to Travis AFB, California, on 25 June 1958; redesignated Western Transport Air Force on 1 July 1958, and Twenty-Second Air Force on 8 January 1966.

### **Twenty-Third Air Force**

The Twenty-Third is the newest of the numbered air forces, established in 1983 to control the 2d Air Division, 1st Special Operations Wing, Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service, and other specialized airlift organizations and units.

Established as Twenty-Third Air Force on 10 February 1983. Activated on 1 March 1983 at Scott AFB, Illinois, assigned to Military Airlift Command.

## **Named Air Forces**

General Headquarters Air Force, the first named air force of the United States Army's air arm, began operations in 1935. The GHQ Air Force became the Air Force Combat Command in 1941. Several of the numbered air forces began as named air forces. Since World War II other named air forces have existed in both operational and support commands. Air Forces Iceland, and the Central, Eastern, Japan, and Western Air Defense Forces, have provided air defense capability. The USAF Special Operations Force controlled operational special forces. The Crew, Flying, and Technical Training Air Forces served Air Training Command both in the air and on the ground. Pacific Air Force/FEAF (Rear) controlled both operational and support forces of Far East Air Forces. Air Materiel Force, European Area, and Air Materiel Force, Pacific Area, on the other hand, served primarily as logistical support establishments. A brief history and lineage of each named Air Force, below, illustrates the varied origins of these establishments.

### **Air Forces Iceland**

Air Forces Iceland, the smallest of the named air forces, operates in a tiny geographical area.

Established as Iceland Air Defense Force and organized on 1 April 1952 at Keflavik Airport, Iceland, assigned to Military Air Transport Ser-

## 1947 TO THE PRESENT

vice. Redesignated Air Forces Iceland on 1 January 1960. Assigned to Air Defense Command, and further to 64th Air Division (Defense), on 1 July 1962. Assigned to 26th Air Division on 1 July 1963; to Goose Air Defense Sector on 4 September 1963; to 37th Air Division on 1 April 1966; to 21st Air Division on 31 December 1969, to Aerospace Defense Command on 1 October 1975; and to Tactical Air Command on 1 October 1979.

### **Air Materiel Force, European Area**

From 1954 to 1962 this named force served as the primary USAF logistical organization in Europe.

Established as Air Materiel Force, Europe, on 1 February 1954. Organized on 1 March 1954 at Wiesbaden, West Germany, assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe. Redesignated Air Materiel Force, European Area, and assigned to Air Materiel Command (later, Air Force Logistics Command), on 1 January 1956. Moved to Chateauroux AS, France, on 15 May 1958. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 July 1962.

### **Air Materiel Force, Pacific Area**

This logistical organization, which eventually became the Pacific counterpart of the preceding establishment, began during World War II.

Established as Far East Air Service Command on 14 July 1944. Activated on 18 August 1944 at Brisbane, Australia, replacing the Far East Air Service Command (Provisional), formed on 15 June 1944 at the same location. Assigned to Far East Air Forces. Moved to Hollandia, New Guinea, on 16 November 1944, and to Manila, Luzon, Philippine Islands, on 7 August 1945. Redesignated Pacific Air Service Command, U.S. Army, in January 1946, and Far East Air Materiel Command on 1 January 1947. Moved to Fuchu, Japan, on 20 January 1947. Moved to FEAMC AB, Japan, on 1 July 1949. Inactivated on 1 February 1952 but immediately organized on same day at FEAMC AB (later, Tachikawa AB), Japan, assigned to Far East Air Forces. Redesignated Far East Air Logistics Force on 1 July 1952. Assigned to Air Materiel Command (later, Air Force Logistics Command) on 1 October 1955 and redesignated Air Materiel Force, Pacific Area, on same day. Moved to Wheeler AFB, Territory of Hawaii, on 1 June 1957 and back to Tachikawa AB, Japan, on 1 April 1960. Discontinued, and inactivated, on 1 July 1962.

### **Aviation Engineer Force**

This short-lived force controlled aviation engineer organizations of the U.S. Army, on duty with the United States Air Force.

## ORGANIZATION AND LINEAGE

Established as Aviation Engineer Force on 28 March 1951. Organized on 10 April 1951 at Wolters AFB, Texas, assigned to Continental Air Command. Discontinued on 25 May 1956.

### **Central Air Defense Force**

The Central Air Defense Force became the third of three air defense forces established within the contiguous United States to supervise and control numerous organizations involved in air defense. It was created to assume parts of the geographic areas of Eastern and Western Air Defense Forces.

Established as Central Air Defense Force on 5 February 1951. Organized on 1 March 1951 at Kansas City, Missouri, assigned to Air Defense Command. Moved to Grandview (later, Richards-Gebaur) AFB, Missouri, on 24 February 1954. Inactivated on 1 January 1960.

### **Crew Training Air Force**

Crew Training Air Force, one of three named air forces of Air Training Command in the 1950s, existed during and shortly after the Korean War. This particular air force provided training for air crews.

Established as Crew Training Air Force on 16 March 1952. Organized on 16 March 1952 at Randolph AFB, Texas, assigned to Air Training Command. Discontinued on 1 July 1957.

### **Eastern Air Defense Force**

Air defense of the eastern portion of the United States was the primary mission of this named air force.

Established as Eastern Air Defense Force, and organized, on 1 September 1949 as Mitchel AFB, New York, assigned to Continental Air Command. Moved to Stewart AFB, New York, on 1 August 1950. Assigned to Air Defense Command on 1 January 1951. Inactivated on 1 January 1960.

### **Flying Training Air Force**

The Flying Training Air Force also served Air Training Command and provided flying training for combat crews and flying training leading to an aeronautical rating. Like the Crew Training Air Force, it existed during and shortly after the Korean War.

Established as Flying Training Air Force on 4 April 1951. Organized on 1 May 1951 at Waco, Texas, assigned to Air Training Command.

Moved to Randolph AFB, Texas, on 31 July 1957. Discontinued on 1 April 1958.

### **Japan Air Defense Force**

This air defense organization was established to replace the 314th Air Division in 1952.

Established as Japan Air Defense Force on 3 January 1952. Organized on 1 March 1952 at Nagoya AB, Japan, assigned to Far East Air Forces. Discontinued on 1 September 1954.

### **Pacific Air Force/FEAF (Rear)**

Established to control Air Force operations in the Pacific and Far East during the move of the Far East Air Forces (FEAF) from Japan to Hawaii, this named air force inactivated when FEAF completed its movement.

Established as Pacific Air Force, and activated, on 1 July 1954 at Hickam AFB, Territory of Hawaii, assigned to Far East Air Forces. Redesignated Pacific Air Force/FEAF (Rear) on 1 July 1956. Inactivated on 1 July 1957.

### **Technical Training Air Force**

Technical Training Air Force, the third of the named air forces under Air Training Command during the Korean war years, provided officer candidate training, indoctrination (basic) training, and technical training to Air Force personnel.

Established as Technical Training Air Force on 4 April 1951. Organized on 16 July 1951 at Gulfport, Mississippi, assigned to Air Training Command. Discontinued on 1 June 1958.

### **USAF Special Operations Force**

When the USAF Special Air Warfare Center became too large and cumbersome for center status, it was elevated to a named air force.

Established as USAF Special Air Warfare Center, and activated, on 19 April 1962, assigned to Tactical Air Command. Organized on 27 April 1962 at Eglin AFB, Florida. Redesignated USAF Special Operations Force on 8 July 1968. Inactivated on 1 July 1974.

### **Western Air Defense Force**

Air defense of the western portion of the United States was the primary mission of this named air force.

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Established as Western Air Defense Force, and organized, on 1 September 1949 at Hamilton AFB, California, assigned to Continental Air Command. Assigned to Air Defense Command on 1 January 1951. Discontinued on 1 July 1960.

## Chapter III

# Types of USAF Organizations

Following World War II, numbered and named air forces became subordinate to the operational major commands. Since the establishment of the USAF in September 1947, the major commands, separate operating agencies, and direct reporting units have been on an organizational level immediately below Headquarters United States Air Force. In this context the USAF is an establishment; Headquarters USAF is its headquarters. Commands, agencies, and direct reporting units are usually named rather than numbered. Exceptions include the 3d Air Division, which enjoyed major command status from January 3, 1949 to January 21, 1951; Sixteenth Air Force, a separate operating agency from July 15, 1956, to July 1, 1957, and the 1947th Headquarters Support Group (formerly the 1947th Administrative Support Group), a direct reporting unit.

Each organizational echelon of the Air Force, beginning with major commands and proceeding down the chain of command to operating locations, the lowest echelon existing in the Air Force, is defined and discussed below.

### **Major Commands**

A major command (MAJCOM) is a major subdivision of the Air Force, assigned a major segment of the USAF mission. Some MAJCOMs are also classified as Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) specified commands. A “specified”



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command—Strategic Air Command since December 14, 1946, United States Air Forces in Europe from January 22, 1951, to July 1, 1956, Aerospace Defense Command from July 1, 1975, until inactivated in 1980, and Military Airlift Command since February 1, 1977—is a single service command that in wartime receives its direction from the President through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the JCS. Other MAJCOMs may be components of JCS “unified” commands, which are aggregate commands made up of pieces of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Most Air Force MAJCOMs have been, or still are, components of various JCS-unified commands; for example, Pacific Air Forces (component of Pacific Command), and United States Air Forces in Europe (component of European Command). Whatever the source of command decision, USAF MAJCOMs consist of two basic types: operational and support.

### **Operational Commands**

An operational command is a MAJCOM composed in whole or in part of strategic, tactical, or defense forces, or else charged with flying directly in support of such forces. Commands in this category are the Alaskan Air Command, Military Airlift Command, Pacific Air Forces, Space Command, Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and United States Air Forces in Europe.

### **Support Commands**

A support command is any command that is not an operational command. Support commands provide supplies, weapon systems, support systems, operational support equipment, combat materiel, maintenance, surface transportation, administration, personnel, training, advanced education, communications, and special services to the Air Force and other supported organizations. Grouped in this category are the Air Force Communications Command, Air Force Logistics Command, Air Force Systems Command, Air Training Command, Air University, and Electronic Security Command.

### **Separate Operating Agencies**

Like the major commands, separate operating agencies are also major subdivisions of the Air Force. They are directly subordinate to USAF, although they are assigned specialized missions when compared to the missions of many Major Command (MAJCOM). Because SOA missions

are specialized and restricted, an appropriate functional element of the Air Staff usually exercises a high degree of technical direction and control over them. Nevertheless, SOAs have all of the “procedural [administrative and logistical] responsibilities” of a major command.

### **Direct Reporting Units**

Both SOAs and direct reporting units (DRUs) have specialized and restricted missions, but HQ USAF has chosen to apply the term direct reporting unit to some of these organizations. Size is not an issue. The Air Force Reserve, while a DRU from 1978 to 1983, was actually much larger in its field organizational structure than some major commands. All DRUs, which do not fit easily into the missions of any MAJCOM or SOA, are directly subordinate to USAF. Therefore, an Air Staff functional manager exercises more technical direction over a DRU than an SOA. Nevertheless, DRUs have many of the “procedural responsibilities” of SOAs.

### **Air Forces**

The first air force in the Army’s air arm was General Headquarters Air Force, a named establishment. The First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces in the United States, and several of the overseas air forces of World War II, began their existence as named establishments, either in the form of geographically designated air districts or geographically designated air forces. Only very briefly, early in World War II, were air forces identified by an Arabic numeral (e.g., 1st Air Force). Beginning in 1942 the War Department required air forces to be numbered in single series beginning with a spelled-out numeral (e.g., First Air Force). Since World War II the Air Force has used both numbered and named air forces. For example, Air Training Command at one time had the Technical Training, Crew Training, and Flying Training Air Forces; Military Airlift Command possessed the Eastern Transport and Western Transport Air Forces; and Air Defense Command held several named air forces: Central, Eastern, and Western Air Defense Forces. Although named air forces have been used both tactically and in support roles, numbered air forces are generally found only in a tactical role.

An air force in the modern USAF is an intermediate echelon of command, directly under the operational and support commands. An air force is assigned (or will be assigned in certain contingencies) significant numbers

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of operational units—i.e., divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons. During World War II, and for a short period thereafter, the numbered air forces had the status now enjoyed by major commands, with each air force having its own subordinate commands—e.g., Fifth Air Force had the V Fighter Command, V Bomber Command, and support commands.

### Divisions

Named and numbered air divisions have existed since World War II. Many of the numbered air divisions began as wings during the war, although some of them are postwar organizations.

### Numbered Divisions

Official policy dictates the use of Arabic numerals for numbered air and aerospace divisions. Examples: 2d Air Division, 7th Air Division, and 1st Strategic Aerospace Division. Following the initiation of Major Command-controlled (MAJCON) four-digit Table of Distribution (T/D) organizations in 1948,\* the major commands were briefly authorized to organize air divisions, provided they secured USAF approval. Two four-digit air divisions (4310th Air Division and 7217th Air Division) were subsequently organized.

A numbered air or aerospace division is an intermediate echelon of command within an operational command. It may be assigned either to an air force or directly to a major command. Such divisions usually are composed of two or more operational wings. Particular characteristics of a numbered air or aerospace division's headquarters are:

- a. Small in size (from 14 to 35 people).
- b. Operational focus—staff is primarily engaged in operations, in contrast to the full complement of staff functions at a MAJCOM headquarters.

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\*Major commands wanted a more flexible organization at lower echelons to permit rapid adjustments in manning that short-time requirements often dictated. Because the manning of permanent Table of Organization (T/O) organizations was judged to be too rigid, in 1948 the Air Force created a new type of temporary organization with no permanent lineage or history, to be manned under T/D authorization. All of the T/D (Major Command-controlled, or MAJCON) organizations have four digits (e.g., 4670th) to distinguish them from permanent (Air Force-controlled, or AFCON) organizations, which have one, two, or three digits in their designation.

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- c. Relationship to higher headquarters—functions as a field extension of a higher headquarters.

Exceptions to these characteristics can be found. For example, some divisions assigned to a numbered air force may perform little more than an inspection function, while other divisions reporting directly to a major command may have a limited assortment of staff functions.

### **Named Divisions**

Although nearly all named divisions are of the Air Force-controlled (AFCON) variety, there are also some T/D air divisions organized as named establishments, such as the Yukon Air Division and the Antilles Air Division. In recent years, however, USAF has maintained tight control over its divisions, and all headquarters above wing level are considered to be AFCON (T/O) units. These constituted divisions are usually numbered, but some have been named for various reasons. The designation of such named divisions may not be changed without HQ USAF approval or by any directives other than those issued HQ USAF. Examples of named divisions include: Aeronautical Systems Division, Aerospace Medical Division, and Air Force Contract Management Division. A named division is an organization within a large support command that is assigned a major or important segment of that command's mission—e.g., the Electronic Systems Division handles a large part of the Air Force Systems Command's workload in electronic systems. Because they are usually technical or highly specialized in nature, named divisions generally have a large number of personnel. One named division of an operational command is the USAF Southern Air Division, which absorbed resources of the United States Air Forces Southern Command in 1976, and is part of Tactical Air Command.

### **Services**

A service establishment is an organization responsible for providing a particular kind of service Air Force wide, and sometimes providing service to agencies outside the Air Force. The Air Weather Service, for example, cooperates not only with the U.S. National Weather Service and weather agencies of foreign nations, but also serves the U.S. Army. On the other hand, the service provided by a "service" organization may be strictly for the Air Force. The USAF Recruiting Service, as an example, recruits personnel for the entire USAF, but not for other branches of the armed forces.

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### **Areas and Regions**

The area and region nomenclature is generally used for organizations whenever a geographical area is involved. Some previous establishments of these types include the Rome Air Materiel Area, Ogden Air Materiel Area, European Communications Area, and Central Air Force Reserve Region. These terms are not generally used within operational commands. The individual terms “area” and “region” do not necessarily represent fixed geographic areas or regions. Their boundaries fluctuate somewhat, based on factors that include the importance of the mission, relative size of the geographic area or region involved, and requirements for intermediate echelons. Areas are roughly comparable to divisions, and regions are roughly equivalent to wings.

### **Wings**

The U.S. Army Air Service/Air Corps/Air Forces wings that existed before 1947 are not comparable with the wings of the USAF. World War II wings, for example, were very large administrative and operational organizations that usually controlled several combat groups and numerous service organizations, often located at widely scattered locations. Many of the World War II wings were redesignated as air divisions after the war. Modern wings, as we know them, began their existence with a service test of combat wings in 1947–1948. These wings were temporary Table of Distribution (T/D) organizations, each having a combat group (the only Table of Organization [T/O] establishment of the wings), an airdrome group, a maintenance and supply group, and a station medical group. In 1948, at the end of the service test, HQ USAF replaced these T/D wings with permanent T/O (constituted) combat wings having a combat group, an air base group, a maintenance and supply group, and a medical group.

Constituted (AFCON) combat wings are always numbered in a single series beginning with an Arabic “1st.” Examples: 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, 21st Tactical Fighter Wing, and 39th Bombardment Wing, Heavy. All AFCON wings have one, two, or three digits in their numerical designations. Most of the constituted establishments and units of an AFCON wing carry the same numerical designation as the wing. The only constant exceptions are the combat squadrons, although certain specialized organizations (such as munitions maintenance squadrons) have also borne numbers

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other than that of the wing to which they were assigned. (A realignment of munitions maintenance squadrons in the 1970s has tended to transfer such squadrons so that their numerical designation now agrees with their parent wing's number.)

In most cases, the numerical designation of the wing came from the combat group which preceded it and became an integral part of the post-World War II wing. In other words, when the 14th Fighter Wing came into existence, it received the "14th" numerical designation from the 14th Fighter Group which had already existed for a number of years and which became the wing's combat component. At the same time, the other component establishments (air base, maintenance and supply, and medical groups), and units of these establishments, also received the "14th" numerical designation, aligning each of them directly to the 14th Wing. The tactical squadrons of the combat group, however, retained their separate and distinct numerical designations.

When the major air command controlled organizations first appeared in 1948, replacing the former Air Force Base Unit system, the MAJCOMs were authorized to designate and organize temporary T/D (nonconstituted) wings with four-digit numerical designations. All T/D wings bear such four-digit designations. Example: 6502d Composite Wing. The T/D groups and/or squadrons comprising T/D wings may bear the same number as the wing of which they are components. However, in cases of duplicate kind and type units, the numerical designation must vary so that no two units have the same designation. For example, should the 5000th Maintenance Wing have three maintenance squadrons, only one of them may bear the "5000th" designation, and the other two would probably be designated 5001st and 5002d Maintenance Squadrons.

The Air Force has three basic types of wings: operational, air base, and support. Operational wings usually have two or more assigned tactical squadrons with specific missions such as bombardment, reconnaissance, fighter, air refueling, missile, flying training, or airlift. When an operational wing also has the primary "host" mission on a base, it is normally responsible for maintaining and operating the base and has a combat support or air base group assigned for that purpose. In addition, it usually has a significant, self-supporting capability in materiel and maintenance, supply, and munitions. When an operational wing is a "tenant" on a base,

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it still has the same operational capability, but varying amounts of its base and materiel support is provided by the host organization. The 42d Bombardment Wing, Heavy, at Loring AFB, Maine, is a typical “host” operational wing.

An air base wing has a support rather than an operational mission, and is responsible for maintaining and operating an air base. In addition, it may be responsible for providing complete functional support to a MAJCOM headquarters and perhaps to an operational establishment. The 15th Air Base Wing at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, illustrates an air base wing supporting a MAJCOM headquarters (HQ PACAF).

Support wings may be, but generally are not, responsible for operating an air base. Included in this category would be wings with such specialized missions as weather, rescue, communications, and medical services. Examples: 1st Weather Wing, 1st Medical Service Wing, 39th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, 355th Drone Maintenance Wing, 3246th Test Wing, and 6940th Security Wing.

### Centers

A center is an establishment that has a specialized mission in areas such as training and development. A center performs most of its mission within a sizeable complex at one location. Normally, a center does not have a significant number of assigned subordinate components. Some examples of centers: Air Force Flight Test Center, Arnold Engineering Development Center, Keesler Technical Training Center, the Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center, USAF Historical Research Center, and the USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center. Some centers are subordinate to major commands, a part of whose mission they perform, while other centers are responsible directly to Headquarters USAF since they have missions that embrace the entire service.

### Groups

Constituted combat and noncombat groups are numbered in single series beginning with an Arabic “1st.” Since 1948, only one, two, and three digits have been used by AFCON groups. Example: 33d Guided Missile Group. Table of Distribution (T/D) groups are designated with four digits from blocks of numbers allocated by USAF to the MAJCOMs and SOAs. Squadrons of a MAJCON group may bear the same numerals as their group

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of assignment, except for duplicate kind and type units within the group structure. Although most of the AFCON combat groups have been replaced by AFCON combat wings, AFCON combat groups are eligible for activation at any time, and in fact some have been activated occasionally when certain missions did not require an organization as large as a wing. Example: 40th Tactical Group at Aviano AB, Italy.

Infrequently, some group may be named rather than numbered. Such groups usually have a special mission and are thus one-of-a-kind organizations. Example: the Orientation Group, USAF. All named establishments and units (groups without a headquarters unit are in the miscellaneous unit category) are AFCON organizations, directly controlled by USAF with respect to missions and organizational actions.

There are three basic types of groups within the Air Force: operational, combat support/air base, and support. An operational group exercises operational control over at least one assigned or rotational tactical mission squadron. It is often used at a small base where no support for the mission squadron is available except from the group. To provide this support, the group has one or more assigned support squadrons. Normally, this type of group is not subordinate to an operational wing. Example: the 40th Tactical Group at Aviano AB, Italy, is assigned directly to Sixteenth Air Force. In a few cases, this type of group may be assigned to an operational wing to exercise control over tactical units, while the wing concentrates on logistical and administrative missions. Example: 86th Tactical Fighter Group at Ramstein AB, Germany, assigned to 86th Tactical Fighter Wing.

Combat Support/Air Base Groups usually operate and maintain an air base and provide base level support to other organizations located or "tenanted" on the base or nearby sub-bases. This type of group has functional support squadrons in areas requiring squadron organization for proper discipline and control. Combat support groups are used in situations involving responsibility for operating a base in support of combat organizations. Air base groups are used whenever the operation of a base is required in support of organizations without a tactical mission.

Support Groups exist in a support command. They have a primary mission directly related to the command mission and may or may not have the additional responsibility of operating an air base. Normally such a group



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has at least one assigned squadron. This category also includes groups with specialized missions in such areas as weather, communications, rescue, and security.

### **Laboratories**

A laboratory is usually similar to a center except that its mission is in the research, exploratory, or advanced development areas. Most laboratories are named units, but occasionally one will be numbered. Examples: Air Force Flight Dynamics Laboratory, Air Force Weapons Laboratory, The Frank J. Seiler Research Laboratory, and 6570th Aerospace Medical Research Laboratory.

### **Squadrons and Flights**

Constituted combat squadrons of the Army's air arm (and currently of the USAF) have consistently been numbered with one, two, or three digits. In this instance, Arabic numerals—e.g., “1st,” or “455th”—are used. Whenever one reads that the “Third” Squadron did thus and so, the reader knows that the author erred, for the proper designation would be “3d.”

Before 1948 the Army Air Forces and its predecessors did have some support squadrons or comparable units (companies, units, etc.) with four-digit numerical designations, but since 1948 all constituted AFCON squadrons and flights have been limited to numerical designations of three digits or less. Flights are sometimes created in lieu of squadrons when only a small unit is required to perform a specific mission. For example, in comparison with the Regular establishment, the Air Force Reserve employs numerous flights. Constituted flights are treated in the same manner as squadrons with respect to organizational matters. After 1948, when the Air Force adopted the MAJCON four-digit organizational system, all MAJCON squadrons and flights have consistently employed four digits in their numerical designations as, for example, the 7111th Support Flight.

Exceptions to the numbering of squadrons and flights are rare, but one such exception should be mentioned because of its prominence: the USAF Air Demonstration Squadron. While the present “Thunderbirds” unit is named, its two predecessors were numbered MAJCON units. The 3600th Air Demonstration Flight (Thunderbirds) was discontinued on June 23, 1956, shortly after the organization of the 3595th Air Demonstration Flight (Thunderbirds) on June 1, 1956. The 3595th was redesignated as the 4520th

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Air Demonstration Squadron (Thunderbirds) on July 1, 1958, and discontinued on February 25, 1967. On that latter date, the constituted AFCON unit, "USAF Air Demonstration Squadron," was activated.

### Miscellaneous Units and Establishments

In addition to the organizations already discussed, the Air Force has used in the past, and still employs, a variety of other generic designations to identify organizations. Some of these terms are:

Academy	District	Plant
Agency	Facility	Range
Band	Hospital	School
Central	Infirmery	Sector
Clinic	Institute	Staff
College	Library	System
Depository	Museum	Team
Depot	Office	Unit
Dispensary	Organization	University

Many of the organizations employing these generic designations are named units or establishments, although in certain categories—such as band, clinic, dispensary, hospital, and infirmery—there are numerous numbered units. AFCON organizations in this miscellaneous category contain one, two, or three digits in their numerical designation, while MAJCOM units have four digits. Some past and present examples of units in this category include: Boston Air Defense Sector; Air Attache System; USAF Museum; Air Force Packaging Evaluation Agency; Air University Field Printing Plant; Air War College; Air Force Chaplains School; Senior NCO Academy; The USAF Band; 761st Air Force Band; USAF Cryptologic Depot; 6251st USAF Clinic; USAF Dispensary, Kelly; Air Force Satellite Control Facility; 4th Tactical Hospital; Extension Course Institute; Air University Library; and Space and Missile Systems Organization. Named units are authorized only through letters issued by Headquarters USAF's Manpower and Organization Directorate, and the relative hierarchical level of the organization is determined at the time a unit is authorized. The hierarchical level may be roughly determined by the level of the organization's "parent unit" or the level of its subordinate components. For instance, because an air defense

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sector is normally assigned to a division and controls squadrons, its hierarchical level is roughly equivalent to a wing or group.

### **Unusual Organizations**

In recent years, at the request of major commands, Headquarters USAF constituted and activated some organizations having no generic designation, and nothing in the organization's name indicates its place in the hierarchy. Tactical Training, Holloman; Tactical Training, Luke; Tactical Training, George; Tactical Training, Davis-Monthan; and Military Airlift, Travis, appeared on the organization charts at TAC and MAC. Such designations provoked the question: "Tactical Training what?" Actually, these particular operational organizations without a generic designation indicator in their designations existed at approximately the division echelon in the Air Force hierarchy. After a wing-base study in 1978-1979, Headquarters USAF abandoned this nomenclature, and all of these organizations were replaced by numbered air divisions or similar, standard organizations. Still on the books at this writing, however, are specialized organizations such as Electronic Security, Strategic; Electronic Security, Tactical; Electronic Security, Europe; and Electronic Security, Pacific. One of these organizations has a wing and other organizations assigned, one has no components at all, one has groups and squadrons, and one has only squadrons.

### **Pseudo Organizations**

Although the Air Force has establishments known as divisions, a division within an establishment's headquarters, such as a personnel or materiel division, is not a unit; it is merely a part of the establishment's headquarters. With other organizational entities in the Air Force the distinction is sometimes less clear.

### **Named Activities**

A named activity is one type of functional entity very often mistaken for a unit. Actually, a named activity is a segment or part of a unit, whose mission or purpose can be directly and more adequately identified by the assignment of a definitive name. The Director of Manpower and Organization, Headquarters USAF, is responsible for administrative control of named activities, all of which must be authorized by a published DAF letter. Some

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named activities in 1982, and the Air Force organizations of which they are segments, appear below.

<b>Named Activity</b>	<b>Segment of</b>
Air Force Civilian Appellate Review Agency	HQ, Air Force Review Boards Office
Air Force Office of Public Affairs, Western Region	HQ, Air Force Service Information & News Center
Air Force Security Clearance Office	HQ, Air Force Office of Security Police
USAF Special Investigations Academy	HQ, Air Force Office of Special Investigations
Air Force Center for Studies and Analyses	HQ, 1947th Headquarters Support Group

Distinguishing between named activities and named units is often difficult. Consider the following named units: Strategic Air Combat Operations Staff, and Air Force Computer Acquisitions Office. These named units have the generic designations of “staff” and “office”—designations that would seem to suggest an activity rather than a unit. On the other hand, in the named activities listed above we find the generic names “agency,” “academy,” and “center,” which would suggest units rather than activities.

On rare occasions a named unit will replace a named activity without a change in designation. This was true for the Air Force Museum, once a named activity segment of Headquarters, 2750th Air Base Wing. On August 8, 1975, the Air Force Museum inactivated as a named activity and was activated as named unit.\* A similar change happened to the USAF Home Town News Center on July 1, 1972. In still another case, the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, a named activity from 1972 (as a segment of Headquarters, 3825th Support Group (Academic), became a named unit assigned to USAF as a direct reporting unit (DRU)\*\* on July 1, 1979.

The most certain way to determine if an organizational entity is a named activity or a named unit is by studying organizational actions which established the entity. Another way is to determine whether the entity has a com-

\*It has since been redesignated the USAF Museum.

\*\*Redesignated as the USAF Historical Research Center on December 1, 1983.

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mander, has its own personnel authorizations, and must submit regular strength reports. These are characteristics of a unit rather than a unit segment.

### **Alphabetically Designated Flights**

An organizational echelon identified as a flight is often used within the Air Force. AFR 26-2 describes a numerically designated flight as “the lowest unit level in the Air Force,” and points out that flights are used “primarily to incorporate small elements into an organized unit.” Although a numbered flight may be used in any command, the Air Force Reserve uses this echelon rather extensively in units such as:

14th Civil Engineering Flight  
301st Weapons System Security Flight  
433d Mobility Support Flight  
445th Aerial Port Flight  
928th Communications Flight

Numbered flights are *units*. Frequently mistaken for a unit, however, are unnumbered or alphabetically designated flights such as Flight A, 26th Tactical Fighter Squadron, or Flight C, 56th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. Flights such as these are organizational shredouts of a squadron and are not units in their own right. They are used simply to distinguish several elements of a squadron that have similar missions. AFR 26-2 defines an alphabetically designated flight as:

. . . part of a squadron (usually a flying squadron) made up of several elements with identical missions. Though it is the equivalent of a branch, it is not a unit, and therefore is not subject to strength reporting or other controls on organization.

### **Squadron Sections**

Squadron sections are sometimes confused with units. For example, a Headquarters Squadron Section, Medical Squadron Section, or Patient Squadron Section, although including “squadron” in their designations, are not squadrons; they are merely segments of units. A headquarters

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squadron section, for example, is a section of a headquarters unit. Any “commander” appointed to a squadron section commands only a portion of a unit.

Squadron sections exist because Headquarters USAF discontinued the generic designation “Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron” in Air Force Letter 20-5, July 18, 1951. At the same time, Headquarters USAF authorized establishments at group and above to have a “headquarters squadron section” as an integral part of their headquarters. Many establishments have squadron sections as part of their headquarters. In addition, squadron sections are sometimes used in large support squadrons to allow commanders to retain command control of functional elements without being overburdened with squadron administration.

### **Detachments**

Before and during World War II, many types of organizations used generic designations which are no longer used, such as:

- 1st AF Combat Film Detachment
- 4th Air Base Operations Section
- 4th AAF Emergency Rescue Crew, Type I
- 6th AAF Combat Camera Unit

All of these units were of the constituted-and-activated type, or what would now be called AFCON. The generic terms detachment, section, crew, and unit, however, are no longer used with Air Force-controlled units.

One of these—the *detachment*—has had its generic name used since World War II in an entirely different manner. Modern detachments are frequently mistaken for units, but in fact they are also merely segments (usually three or more people) or parts of a unit, generally stationed away from the physical location of the parent unit. Many detachments carry a number, such as Detachment 5, 9th Weather Squadron; others may be unnumbered, such as Detachment, Headquarters, 10th Combat Support Group. Although not a unit, a detachment may be analogous to a unit under the Universal Code of Military Justice when a commissioned officer is appointed by orders as its “commander.” Thus, modern detachments are often mistaken for units because they have commanders and are subject to some of the same organizational actions applying to units, including designation, activation, assignment, and inactivation.

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Any unit may have one or more detachments, and many Air Force organizations, such as weather and communications squadrons, operate primarily through detachments. Very often, since most day-to-day work is conducted by detachment personnel, *unit* honors have been awarded to specific detachments in recognition of outstanding performance or achievement by detachment personnel.

Because detachments are not units, they have no lineage, no continuing history, and no authorized official emblem. When a specific detachment is discontinued or inactivated, the detachment (and its history) is terminated even though a similarly designated detachment may later be designated and manned. Suppose that during its existence the 1st Weather Squadron had three detachments bearing the numeral "1" and that the functions of each Detachment 1 were weather observing and forecasting. Moreover, suppose the first Detachment 1 received an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA). Because detachments have no continuing history, the second and third Detachments 1, 1st Weather Squadron, may not claim the award just because it was given to the functional entity that existed earlier.

A detachment of one unit may not be reassigned to another unit, although it may be attached to another unit for operational control. A unit cannot be redesignated as a detachment, nor may a detachment be redesignated as a unit.

### **Operating Locations**

Occasionally, when a very small group of people is separated from the parent unit and the number involved is so small (usually less than three people) that a detachment seems unnecessary, an operating location (OL) may be designated to account for the people by location. Operating locations do not have commanders, although the highest ranking individual is usually placed in charge. An operating location of one unit may not be reassigned to another unit, although it may be attached to another unit for operational or administrative control.

### **Air Force Elements**

Another pseudo unit, the Air Force element, was created in 1976 when certain USAF special activities squadrons were eliminated. The elements serve as holding components for personnel working in other established

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activities and are not designated or constituted as units. An Air Force element does not have a commander. The senior officer of an element is responsible for seeing that all element personnel receive proper support; he also has some statutory command responsibilities, including courts martial jurisdiction.

### **For More Information**

This review of the organization of the Air Force cannot answer all of the questions likely to arise in the course of an Air Force career. Readers are advised to acquaint themselves with Air Force Regulation 26-2, "Organization Policy and Guidance," issued most recently on January 6, 1982. Every major command has its own supplement to this regulation, and some have organizational directives of their own. All major commands explain their units and unit functions in their organizational (23-series) regulations.



## GLOSSARY

activate

At different periods of time this lineage term has meant:

(1922–1959 and 1968–) to bring a constituted (or reconstituted) inactive AFCON unit into existence by assigning personnel to it (in 1922, “activate” replaced the term “organize,” first definition; presently “activate” is used with “constitute”; thus, AFCON units are “constituted” and “activated”);

(1922–1959 and 1968–) to bring an established (or reestablished) AFCON establishment into existence by assigning personnel to its headquarters unit (presently, AFCON establishments are “established and activated”);

(1959–1968) to place an AFCON unit on the active Air Force List without resources and assign it to a MAJCOM or SOA for organization;

(1959–1968) to place an established (or reestablished) AFCON establishment on the active Air Force List without resources and assign it to a MAJCOM or SOA for organization;

(1968–) to bring a MAJCON unit into existence by assigning personnel to it (in 1968, it replaced the term “organize,” second definition; presently it is used with “designate”; thus, MAJCON units are “designated” and “activated”);

(1968–) to bring an established MAJCON establishment into existence by assigning personnel to its headquarters unit (presently used with “establish,” fourth definition; currently, MAJCON establishments are “established and activated”).

active list

At different periods of time, this reference term has meant:

(1907–1922) a list of U.S. Army units designated and organized by the War Department;

(1922–1947) a list of U.S. Army units constituted or reconstituted by the War Department and activated by the command to which assigned;

(1947–1959 and 1968–) a list of USAF units constituted or reconstituted by Department of the Air Force (DAF) letter and activated by the major command or separate operating agency to which assigned; a list of USAF units constituted or reconstituted, and activated, by DAF letter, thereafter assigned to a major command or separate operating agency for organization.

AFCON

Air Force (Headquarters USAF)-controlled

AFCON unit

Units identified as constituted, Table of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E), or simply Table of Organization (T/O) units. Until September

## GLOSSARY

1947, the legal authority over these units resided in the War Department. The term "AFCON unit" is used in these definitions retroactively to 1907 to indicate a constituted T/O War Department organization. After 1947 the Department of the Air Force (DAF) exercised control over these units. Some constituted units before 1948 had as many as four digits in their numerical designations, but since 1948 AFCON units have had only one, two, or three digits in their numerical designations. All headquarters units above wing level, and all named (unnumbered) units, are AFCON units. Organization actions pertaining to AFCON units are either accomplished or directed by Headquarters USAF through the publication of Department of the Air Force letters.

- Air Force list      A list of all AFCON units, whether active or inactive. Active units appear in the regular Air Force, Air Force Reserve, or Air National Guard. They are entered on the active list, while inactive units appear on the "inactive list."
- allot      To assign a regular Air Force (earlier, Army) unit to the National Guard.
- Army list      (1913–1947) a list of all constituted units of the Army, whether active or inactive, including Army Air Service, Army Air Corps, and Army Air Forces units manned under Table of Organization and Equipment authorizations. Active units are entered on the "active list," while inactive units appear on the "inactive list."
- assign      To place a military unit within a military establishment so that the unit becomes an element or component of the larger organization. A unit is customarily assigned to an establishment, never to another unit; however, flights are sometimes assigned to squadrons in unit-to-unit assignments. Establishments are always assigned to higher echelon establishments, all the way up to the United States Air Force.
- assigned unit      A military unit that is an element or component of a larger military establishment to which it is assigned.
- attach      To place a military unit temporarily under the control of another military unit or establishment for any or all of the following: administration, logistical support, or operational control. Unit attachment orders normally specify the purpose(s) for which a unit is attached. Attachment of a unit does not make the attached unit formally an element or component of the organization to which it is attached. MAJCOMs and SOAs may attach units within their command as desired, without reference to Headquarters USAF, but the attachment of a unit from one command to another requires Headquarters USAF approval. See also "detach."
- attached unit      A unit placed under the temporary control of another military unit or establishment for administration, logistical support, operational control, or any combination thereof, without making the attached unit an integral part of the unit or establishment to which attached. Attachment usually involves physical separation from the establishment of assignment.
- authorize      To designate a unit and place it on the inactive Army list. During the middle and late 1920s and early 1930s this term was used in place of "constitute," particularly for units held for an emergency and not scheduled for immediate activation.

## GLOSSARY

- component** A unit that is a part of an establishment as one of the establishment's elements; also, an establishment that is part of a larger establishment. For example, the squadrons assigned to a group are the group's components; the groups (and, often, squadrons) assigned to a wing are the wing's components. See also, "element."
- consolidate** To combine two (or more) AFCON units, merging their lineage into a single line, thereby forming a single unit. Two (or more) units that have essentially the same designations and functions, but were active at different times, can be consolidated. For establishments, it means to combine two (or more) AFCON establishments, merging their lineage into a single line, thereby forming a single establishment. Establishments are consolidated effective with the consolidation of their headquarters units, and can occur when the establishments were active at different times.
- constitute** (1922-) to give an official name, or number and name, to an AFCON unit and place it on the inactive Army (after 1947, Air Force) list, making it available for activation (constitute replaced the term "designate," first definition).
- DAF** Department of the Air Force
- demobilize** (1907-1922) to withdraw all personnel from an active unit and remove the unit entirely from the Army list. The current term is "disband."
- designate** At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant:  
(1907-1922) to give an official name, or number and name, to a unit and place it on the inactive Army list (note, after 1922 units of the AFCON type were "constituted" rather than "designated");  
(1907-) to give an official name, or number and name, to a provisional unit;  
(1944-) to give an official number and name, or name only to a MAJCON unit (after 1959 all named units became AFCON).
- designation** The name of a unit or establishment. A designation includes all parts of the name: numerical, functional, and generic. Designation also applies to named activities and certain functions. To further identify a unit and clarify its designation, descriptive words are sometimes added parenthetically. Parenthetical identification of a unit, suffixed to the regular designation, can be added only by the authority constituting or designating the unit or activity.
- detach** To relinquish control of an assigned component, usually for a specific purpose and period of time, with the component serving in attached status with another unit or establishment, often at a location other than its permanent base.
- detached unit** A unit that is serving away from the establishment in which it is an assigned organic element or component. A detached unit is usually attached temporarily to another organization, but it may function as a separate unit while detached, although it is always responsible to an establishment or unit for its operational activities.
- disband** (1922-) to remove an inactive AFCON unit from the inactive Army (after 1947, Air Force) list. Shortly before and during World War II, this action was also used to withdraw all personnel from an active unit and

## GLOSSARY

simultaneously remove the unit from the Army list. Disband replaced the term “demobilize.”

- discontinue      At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant:  
(1944-1968) to withdraw all personnel from an active MAJCON unit, terminating the unit’s existence (for later term, see “inactivate,” fifth definition);  
(1959-1968) to withdraw all personnel from an active AFCON unit, rendering it nonoperative but still active on paper (consequently, in this period “discontinue” replaced the term “inactivate,” third definition);  
(1959-1968) to render an active AFCON establishment nonoperative, although temporarily still active on paper, by withdrawing all personnel from its headquarters unit (used in conjunction with “inactivate,” fourth definition);  
(1968-) to terminate a command, subcommand, school, or other activity previously established by War Department or Department of the Air Force letter.
- disestablish      At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant:  
(1907-) to cause an AFCON establishment to cease to exist by “redesignating” its headquarters unit as a squadron or miscellaneous unit;  
(1907-1922) to cause an AFCON establishment to cease to exist and remove it entirely from the Army List by “demobilizing” its headquarters unit;  
(1922-) to cause an AFCON establishment to cease to exist and remove it entirely from the Army (after 1947, Air Force) list by “disbanding” its headquarters unit;  
(1948-1958) To cause a MAJCON establishment to cease to exist by “discontinuing” its headquarters unit;  
(1948-) to cause a MAJCON establishment to cease to exist by “redesignating” its headquarters unit as a squadron or miscellaneous unit;  
(1968-) to cause a MAJCON establishment to cease to exist by “inactivating” its headquarters unit.
- DRU              Direct Reporting Unit
- element         A synonym for component; a unit that is part of an establishment; one of the establishment’s elements or components.
- establish        At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant:  
(1907-1922) to give an official name or number and name, to an establishment and place it on the inactive Army list, accomplished by “designating” a headquarters unit;  
(1907-) to give an official name, or number and name, to an AFCON establishment and place it on the Army (after 1947, Air Force) list, accomplished by “redesignating” an existing inactive squadron or miscellaneous unit as a headquarters unit;  
(1922-) to give an official name, or number and name, to an AFCON establishment and place it on the Army (after 1947, Air Force) list, accomplished by “constituting” its headquarters unit;  
(1948-1959) to give an official name or number and name, to a MAJCON establishment, accomplished by “designating” a headquarters unit (after 1959, all named establishments were AFCON);  
(1948-) the act of designating and bringing into being an activity to which no people are directly assigned. Certain commands, subcommands, schools, and named activities have been established by War Department and Department of the Air Force letters.

## GLOSSARY

establish (active)	At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant: (1907–) to give an official name, or number and name, to an AFCON establishment, at the same time bringing the establishment into existence with personnel, accomplished by “redesignating” an active AFCON squadron or miscellaneous unit as a headquarters unit; (1948–1959) to give an official name or (1948 to the present) number and name to a MAJCOM establishment, at the same time bringing the establishment into existence with personnel, accomplished by “redesignating” an active MAJCOM squadron or miscellaneous unit as a headquarters unit.
establishment	Any military organization having a headquarters component. Most groups and all higher echelon organizations are establishments, and always have a headquarters to which people are assigned. Establishments generally have subordinate components—lower echelon establishments, units, or both. An AFCON establishment comes into existence with the constitution of its headquarters, and is activated and inactivated concurrently with its headquarters. A MAJCOM establishment is “established” with the “designation” of its headquarters, and is “organized” (the term used between 1948 and 1968) and “activated” (the term used from 1968 to today) concurrently with its headquarters. A MAJCOM establishment is “disestablished” with the “discontinuance” (the term used between 1948 and 1968) or “inactivation” (the term used after 1968) of its headquarters unit.
extend federal recognition	Air National Guard term meaning the recognition by the Secretary of War (to 1947) or Secretary of the Air Force that a unit is an organized component of the National (later, Air National) Guard in the state to which the unit is allotted.
inactivate	At different times, this term has carried different definitions: (1922–1959 and 1968–) to withdraw all personnel from an active AFCON unit and place the unit on the inactive Army (after 1947, Air Force) list (for the term used until 1922, see “demobilize”); (1922–1959 and 1968–) to place an AFCON establishment on the inactive Army (after 1947, Air Force) list by withdrawing all personnel from its headquarters unit; (1959–1968) to place an active, nonoperative AFCON unit on the inactive Air Force list, following its discontinuance (used with “discontinue,” second definition; during this period, AFCON units were “discontinued” and “inactivated”); (1959–1968) to place an active, nonoperative AFCON establishment on the inactive Air Force list, following discontinuance of its headquarters unit (for a brief period, AFCON establishments were “discontinued” and “inactivated”); (1968–) to withdraw all personnel from an active MAJCON unit, terminating the unit’s existence (“inactivate” replaced the term “discontinue,” first definition).
inactive list	A list of constituted or reconstituted U.S. Army (1907–1947) or USAF (after 1947) units that are not disbanded (units on this list may have been activated at one time and subsequently inactivated, or they may never have been activated).
MAJCOM	Major Command. This term is sometimes used to include Separate Operating Agencies.
MAJCON	Major Command-controlled

## GLOSSARY

MAJCON unit	A unit controlled by a major command or a separate operating agency. These units are designated, nonconstituted Table of Distribution units that are temporary in nature; once discontinued (the term used between 1944 and 1968) or inactivated (the term used from 1968 to today) their existence terminates and cannot be revived. From 1944 to 1948, Army Air Forces (later, Air Force) Base Units served as the first MAJCON units. In 1948, the Air Force adopted its present four digit numerical system for Table of Distribution MAJCON units. Provisional units are a special category of MAJCON units.
named unit	Certain Air Force units are named rather than numbered. An unnumbered unit usually provides support or a service on a geographical basis reflected in its name, or it performs a special function solely or primarily in one location. All named units are AFCON units; they are authorized by Headquarters USAF through Department of the Air Force letters.
numbered unit	A unit bearing digits; a majority of the Air Force's units are numbered. AFCON units are assigned a number of no more than three digits. MAJCON units are assigned a four-digit designation from blocks of numbers allocated to each MAJCOM and SOA by Headquarters USAF.
order to active service	To place a Reserve or National Guard unit on active duty with the regular Air Force.
organization	A convenient term generally used to describe both units and establishments.
organize	At different periods of time, this lineage term has meant: (1907-1922) to bring a designated inactive unit into existence by assigning personnel to it (this term was used with "designate," first definition; in those years units were "designated" and "organized"); (1907-1922) to bring an established AFCON establishment into existence by assigning personnel to its headquarters unit (until 1922, establishments were "established and organized"); (1944-1968) to bring a MAJCOM unit into existence by assigning personnel to it (used with "designate", second definition; until 1968, MAJCON units were "designated" and "organized"); (1948-1968) to bring an established MAJCON establishment into existence by assigning personnel to its headquarters unit (used with "establish," fourth definition; until 1968 MAJCON establishments were "established" and "organized"); (1959-1968) to bring an activated AFCON unit into existence, accomplished by MAJCOM or SOA orders assigning personnel, following the unit's activation without resources (this term was used by MAJCOMs and SOAs with "constitute" and "activate"; for a brief period AFCON units were "constituted", "activated," and "organized"); (1959-1968) to bring an AFCON establishment into existence, accomplished by MAJCOM or SOA orders assigning personnel to its headquarters unit following the establishment's activation without resources (this term was used by MAJCOMs and SOAs with "activate"; for a brief period AFCON establishments were "established," "activated," and "organized"); (1968-) to arrange the components or functions of a unit or establishment with levels of supervision, internal relationships, and responsibilities.
parent unit	A unit that directly administers and controls integral detachments or alphabetical flights. An establishment that directly administers and controls subordinate units and establishments.

## GLOSSARY

provisional unit	A temporary unit (or establishment) organized by a MAJCOM or SOA to perform a specific task, usually for a short period.
reconstitute	(1922-) to return a “disbanded” (or “demobilized”) AFCON unit to the Army (after 1947, Air Force) list, making it available for activation.
redesignate	To change the name, number, or number and name of a unit, an establishment, a named activity, or a detachment. Redesignation has the effect of removing the previous designation from current records and substituting the new designation. Redesignation of named activities, commands, special operating agencies, and other high echelon organizations is accomplished by Department of the Air Force letters. When the Air Force adopted the present MAJCON system in 1948, the redesignation policy permitted MAJCOMs (and later SOAs) to redesignate Table of Distribution units at wing level and below as necessary, using the numbers allocated by Headquarters USAF. The redesignation of the headquarters unit of any establishment, whether AFCON or MAJCON, automatically redesignates the establishment.
reestablish	(1907-) to return a former AFCON establishment to the inactive Army (after 1947, to the Air Force) list by “reconstituting” its disbanded headquarters unit, or by “redesignating” back to a headquarters unit an inactive squadron or miscellaneous unit that previously served as its headquarters unit.
reestablish (active)	(1907-) to return a former AFCON establishment to active status by “redesignating” back to a headquarters unit an active squadron or miscellaneous unit that previously served as its headquarters unit; (1946-) to return a former MAJCON establishment to active status by “redesignating” back to a headquarters unit an active squadron or miscellaneous unit that previously served as its headquarters unit.
relieve from active Service	To relieve or release an Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve unit from active service with the regular Air Force. (See also, “return to state control.”)
reorganize	To rearrange or regroup the components or functions of a unit or establishment with levels of supervision, internal relationships, and responsibilities.
return to state Control	To return an Air National Guard unit to the control of its state of allocation following a period of active duty with the regular Air Force.
separate unit	See detached unit
SOA	Separate Operating Agency
T/D	Table of Distribution, a manning document generally used by MAJCON units.
T/O&E	Table of Organization and Equipment, a manning/equipment document generally used by AFCON units.
unit	A military organization having a mission, functions, personnel, and structure prescribed by proper authority and created by directives of the War Department (through designation or constitution, 1907-1947) or by the Department of the Air Force (through constitution, after 1947), or else

## GLOSSARY

created by directives of the MAJCOMs and SOAs (through designation, 1944 to the present). All military units must have an officer designated as commander. AFCON units may be active or inactive, existing until they are disbanded, and can be reconstituted. MAJCON and provisional units cease to exist when they have been discontinued (1944–1948) or inactivated (1968 to the present).

WD

War Department. The U.S. Army's air arm was controlled by the War Department until 1947, when the Department of the Air Force was established.





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