

## 15th Wing Emblem

**Approved:** 5 October 1942

**Description:** On a bend azure, two terrestrial lightning flashes issuant from base of the first, overall a gun sight counterchanged.

**Significance:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The lightning flashes represent the speed of modern aviation. The gun sight represents the combat mission of the Wing's predecessors.

**Motto:** None: Original emblem for the 15th Fighter Group, reflected "PROSEQUOR ALIS" (I pursue with wings) instead of "15TH AIRLIFT WING" on scroll below shield. On 10 December 1992, the Air Force Historical Research Agency approved the 15th Air Base Wing (ABW) Commander's request to delete this motto from the wing's heraldry record since it was no longer applicable to the 15th Air Base Wing mission. When the 15 ABW redesignated as the 15th Airlift Wing on 28 April 2003 and again to the 15th Wing on 18 May 2010, the wording in the scroll changed to reflect the new designation.

### Glossary:

Establish: To assign a newly designated unit to a higher headquarters.

Activate/Organize: To bring a unit into physical existence by assignment of personnel.

Inactivate/Discontinue: To withdraw all personnel from an organization and place it on the inactive list, from which it can in the future be activated again, if desired.

Consolidate: To combine two (or more) organizations, merging their lineage into a single line, thereby forming a single organization.

*\* As part of a larger effort to combine later wings with units of World War II heritage, the Air Force consolidated the 15th Pursuit Group's heritage with the 15th Tactical Wing (later the 15th 15 ABW, 15 AW, and 15 WG) in 1984.*

# 15th Wing Heritage Pamphlet



Product of the:  
15th Wing History Office  
Current as of:  
December 2010

### 1940-1946 Group Heritage

The Army Air Corps established the 15th Pursuit Group (Fighter), (later the 15th Pursuit Group (Interceptor) and then the 15th Fighter Group), as part of the 14th Pursuit Wing stationed at Wheeler Field in the Territory of Hawaii just one year before the United States entered World War II. The group served as part of the Hawaiian defense force from its activation in December 1940 until mid-1944.

When the Japanese attacked military installations on the island of Oahu on 7 December 1941, the unit suffered numerous casualties and lost a large number of aircraft. After the attacks, the group recovered and continued its mission to defend the Hawaiian Islands against further attacks while sending several squadrons to the Central and South Pacific for operations against the Japanese.

In 1944 the group, newly equipped with P-51s, began very long range escort missions from the Hawaiian Islands. In early 1945 the unit moved to Iwo Jima, where it supported the landing of Allied troops on the Bonin Islands. In April and May 1945, its P-51s escorted B-29 raids over Japan and supported the Allied landing at Okinawa with fighter attacks on Japanese airfields in the area. The group continued a combination of fighter sweeps and escort missions over the main Japanese Islands until the end of the war. It returned to the Hawaiian Islands in November 1945 and inactivated in October 1946.

### 1955-1960 Group Heritage

The Air Force again activated the 15th Fighter Group in 1955, after redesignating it the 15th Fighter Group (Air Defense), based in New York as part of the Syracuse Air Defense Sector. The group flew F-86s and later F-102s as part of the air defense shield in the Northeastern United States during the early years of the Cold War, until the Air Force discontinued the unit in 1960.

### Commanders: 15th Tactical Fighter Wing (continued)

1966-1966	Col Charles J. Bowers
1966-1967	Col James D. Catington
1967-1968	Col Roy D. Carlson
1968-1970	Col Clifford H. Meier
1970-1970	Col Travis R. McNeil

### Commanders: 15th Air Base Wing

1971-1972	Col Ernest W. Pate
1972-1972	Col Howard R. Inks
1972-1976	Col Wilmot E. Y. Paxton
1976-1976	Col Richard L. Thompson
1976-1978	Col Howard F. O'Neal
1978-1980	Col Sharman R. Stevenson
1980-1983	Col John A. Parrish, Jr.
1983-1984	Col Charles F. Luigs
1984-1985	Col Keith B. Connolly
1985-1987	Col Wayne E. Clark
1987-1987	Col Timothy D. Gill
1987-1988	Col William J. Kennedy
1988-1991	Col Don A. Lyon
1991-1993	Col William C. Van Meter
1993-1996	Brig Gen Dwight M. Kealoha
1996-1997	Col Bruce A. Brown
1997-1999	Col Ann M. Testa
1999-2001	Brig Gen Steven J. Redmann
2001-2003	Col Albert F. Riggle

### Commanders: 15th Airlift Wing

2003-2005	Col Raymond G. Torres
2005-2006	Col William J. Changose
2006-2008	Col John J. Torres
2008-2010	Col Giovanni K. Tuck

### Commanders: 15th Wing

2010-2012	Col Sam C. Barrett
2012 - present	Col Johnny Roscoe

### Group/Wing Commanders

#### Commanders: 15th Pursuit Group (Fighter)

1940-1940 Maj Clyde K. Rich  
1940-1941 Maj Lorry N. Tindal  
1941-1941 Maj Clarence F. Hegy  
1941-1941 Maj Lorry N. Tindal  
1941-1942 Lt Col Paul W. Blanchard

#### Commanders: 15th Pursuit Group (Interceptor)

1942-1943 Lt Col William S. Steele  
1943-1943 Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland

#### Commanders: 15th Fighter Group

1943-1943 Lt Col Kenneth R. Powell  
1943-1943 Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland  
1943-1943 Lt Col William A. Bowen  
1943-1943 Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland  
1943-1945 Col James O Beckwith, Jr.  
1945-1945 Lt Col Dewitt S. Spain  
1945-1945 Lt Col Julian E. Thomas  
1945-1945 Lt Col Elmer E. Booth  
1945-1945 Col John W. Mitchell  
1945-1945 Col William Eades  
1945-1946 Col Oswald W. Lunde

#### Commanders: 15th Fighter Group (Air Defense)

1955-1956 Col Stanley E. Matthews  
1956-1957 Col Wayne B. Curren  
1957-1959 Col Thomas L. Wiper  
1959-1960 Col Vic L. Byers, Jr.

#### Commanders: 15th Tactical Fighter Wing

1962-1964 Col George L. Jones  
1964-1964 Col Francis J. Vetort  
1964-1965 Col Levi R. Chase  
1965-1965 Col Raymond A. Bradley  
1965-1966 Col Woodrow W. Ramsey  
1966-1966 Col Donald N. Stanfield

### 1962-1970 Wing Heritage

The Air Force established the 15th Tactical Fighter Wing at MacDill Air Force Base (AFB), Florida in 1962. The wing conducted tactical fighter combat crew training, adding F-4 fighter aircrew training in 1965 and B-57 light-bomber aircrew training in 1968.

The wing also supported a number of real world missions including in 1962, for response to the Cuban Missile Crisis, in 1965 the wing deployed four squadrons to Southeast Asia, and in 1968 it deployed 16 F-4s during the Pueblo Crisis with North Korea. The Air Force inactivated the wing in 1970.

### 1971-Present Day Wing Heritage

The Air Force activated the newly redesignated 15th Air Base Wing (ABW) at Hickam AFB, Hawaii in 1971 with control over Hickam AFB, Wheeler AFB, Dillingham Field, Johnston Island, Bellows Air Force Station, Wake Island, and a number of other small island groups in the Central and South Pacific. Following the end of the Vietnam War in 1973, the wing and its units welcomed the returning Prisoners-of-War to American soil and sheltered over 93,000 evacuees from Southeast Asia as part of Operations Babylift and New Life in 1975.

Additionally, the wing's EC-135s provided airborne command and control for the Commander-in-Chief Pacific from 1971-1992. In 1992 the wing began flying C-135 executive aircraft that provided special air transport for many local military commanders. Today the wing operates similar executive airlift using a C-37 and a C-40.

In 2003, the Air Force redesignated the 15 ABW as the 15th Airlift Wing, in preparation for the new C-17 operations beginning in 2005, which continue today. In 2010, the Air Force redesignated the 15 AW as the 15th Wing to reflect its new missions operating KC-135s and F-22s with the Air National Guard.

## Lineage and Honors

### 1940-1946 Heritage

Established	15th Pursuit Group (Fighter)	22 Nov 1940
Activated at	Wheeler Field, Territory of Hawaii	01 Dec 1940
Redesignated	15th Pursuit Group (Interceptor)	12 Feb 1942
Redesignated	15th Fighter Group	15 May 1942
Moved to	Bellows Field, Territory of Hawaii	03 Jun 1944
Moved to	South Field, Iwo Jima	06 Mar 1945
Moved to	Bellows Field, Territory of Hawaii	25 Nov 1945
Moved to	Wheeler Field, Territory of Hawaii	09 Feb 1945
Inactivated		15 Oct 1946

### 1955-1960 Heritage

Redesignated	15th Fighter Group (Air Defense)	20 Jun 1955
Activated at	Niagara Falls Municipal Airport, New York	18 Aug 1955
Discontinued		01 Jul 1960

—Lineages and Honors Consolidated\* on 31 Jan 1984 with:—

### 1962-1970 Heritage

Established	15th Tactical Fighter Wing	17 Apr 1962
Activated	(but not manned)	17 Apr 1962
Organized at	MacDill Air Force Base, Florida	01 Jul 1962
Inactivated		01 Oct 1970

### 1971-Present Day Heritage

Redesignated	15th Air Base Wing	20 Oct 1971
Activated at	Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii	01 Nov 1971
Redesignated	15th Airlift Wing	28 Apr 2003
Redesignated	15th Wing	18 May 2010

## Aircraft Flown

### 1940-1946

A-12, A-24, A-26, B-12, OA-9, P-26, P-36,  
P-39, P-40, P-47, P-51, P-61, P-70.

### 1955-1960

F-86, F-102.

### 1962-1970

B-57, F-4, F-84, T-33.

### 1971-current\*

C-135, EC-135, O-2, T-33,  
C-17\*, C-37\*, C-40\*, KC-135\*, F-22\*.

## Campaign Streamers

World War II: Central Pacific  
World War II: Air Offensive, Japan

## Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation: Japan, 7 Apr 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards:

-1 Jan 1965-1 Jun 1966	-1 Jan 1969-31 Dec 1969
-4 Apr 1975-3 Sep 1975	-25 Feb 1986-25 Mar 1986
-1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1991	-1 Jul 1991-30 Jun 1993
-1 Oct 1993-30 Sep 1995	-1 Oct 1995-1 Aug 1997
-2 Aug 1997-1 Aug 1999	-29 Nov 1999-30 Nov 2001
-1 Nov 2002-31 Oct 2004	-1 Nov 2004-31 Oct 2006
	-1 Nov 2006-31 Oct 2007