

## 452 AIR MOBILITY WING



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

452 Bombardment Wing, Light established, 10 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to Active Service, 10 Aug 1950  
Inactivated, 10 May 1952  
Redesignated 452 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, 6 Jun 1952  
Activated in the Reserve, 13 Jun 1952  
Redesignated 452 Bombardment Wing, Tactical, 22 May 1955  
Redesignated 452 Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, 1 Jul 1957  
Redesignated 452 Military Airlift Wing, 1 Jul 1966  
Redesignated 452 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1972  
Redesignated 452 Air Refueling Wing, 1 Oct 1976  
Redesignated 452 Air Refueling Wing, Heavy, 8 Mar 1978  
Redesignated 452 Air Refueling Wing, 1 Feb 1992  
Redesignated 452 Air Mobility Wing, 1 May 1994

#### STATIONS

Long Beach Muni Aprt, CA, 27 Jun 1949  
George AFB, CA, 10 Aug-Oct 1950  
Itazuke AB, Japan, 26 Oct 1950  
Miho AB, Japan, c. 10 Dec 1950  
Pusan-East AB, South Korea, 23 May 1951-10 May 1952  
Long Beach Muni Aprt, CA, 13 Jun 1952

March AFB, CA, 14 Oct 1960  
Hamilton AFB, CA, 1 Jan 1972  
March AFB (later, ARB), CA 12 Jan 1976

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Fourth Air Force, 27 Jun 1949  
Tactical Air Command, 10 Aug 1950  
Fifth Air Force, 15 Nov 1950-10 May 1952  
4 Air Reserve District, 13 Jun 1952  
Fourth Air Force, 1 Dec 1952  
Sixth Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Sep 1960  
Western Air Force Reserve Region, 31 Dec 1969  
Tenth Air Force, 8 Oct 1976  
Fourth Air Force, 1 Oct 1993

### **ATTACHMENTS**

8 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 15-30 Nov 1950  
314 Air Division, 1 Dec 1950-25 May 1951

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

T-11, 1949-1950  
B-26, 1949-1952  
T-6, 1952-1954  
C-46, 1952-1954  
F/TF-51, 1953-1954  
B-26, 1953-1957  
T-28, 1953-1955  
T-33, 1953-1955  
FB-26, 1953-1954  
C-45, 1953-1955, 1957-1958  
F-80, 1954-1955  
TF-80  
TB-26, 1954-1957  
TB-25, 1954-1955  
C-46, 1957-1958  
C-47, 1957-1958  
C-119, 1958-1969  
C-124, 1965-1972  
C-130, 1972-1976  
KC-135, 1976  
KC-10, 1981-1995  
C-141, 1994-2005  
C-17, 2004

## **COMMANDERS**

Brig Gen Luther W. Sweetser Jr., 27 Jun 1949  
Col Brooks A. Lawhon, 12 May 1951  
Col Reginald J. Clizbe, Aug 1951  
Col Albert W. Fletcher, 10 Feb-10 May 1952  
Col George M. Miller Jr., 13 Jun 1952  
Brig Gen Joseph S. Marriott, by Oct 1952  
Maj Gen John R. Alison, 15 May 1955  
Lt Col George F. Schlagel, 1 Oct 1959  
Brig Gen Earl O. Anderson, 16 Jun 1960  
Col Merle E. Larson, 1 May 1969  
Col Harry J. Huff II, 13 Sep 1969  
Brig Gen William G. Hathaway, Jul 1972  
Brig Gen James L. Wade, 12 Jan 1976  
Brig Gen Donald R. Blalack, 7 May 1978  
Col John D. Moore, 5 May 1980  
Brig Gen William B. McDaniel, 1 Nov 1980  
Col James E. Hamer, 27 Apr 1987  
Brig Gen Michael J. Peters, Apr 1989  
Brig Gen Clayton T. Gadd, 15 Jan 1995  
Brig Gen James T. Rubeor, Jul 2003  
Brig Gen Russell A. Muncy, 3 Nov 2013  
Col James E. Hamer, 27 Apr 1987  
Brig Gen Michael J. Peters, Apr 1989  
Brig Gen Clayton T. Gadd, 15 Jan 1995  
Col Peter T. Bentley, 12 Sep 1999  
Col Timothy J. Wrighton, Feb 2002-Jun 2003  
Unkn, Jul 2003-Feb 2010  
Brig Gen Udo K. McGregor, Mar 2010  
Col Samuel C. Mahaney, Jul 2012

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Korea  
UN Offensive  
CCF Intervention  
First UN Counteroffensive  
CCF Spring Offensive  
UN Summer-Fall Offensive  
Second Korean Winter  
Korea Summer-Fall 1952

Southwest Asia  
Defense of Saudi Arabia  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1976-2 Oct 1977

1 Jul 1991-30 Jun 1993

1 Sep 1995-31 Aug 1996

1 Sep 1997-31 Aug 1999

1 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

1 Oct 2004-30 Sep 2006; 1 Oct

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

27 Oct 1950-27 Oct 1951

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jan 1967-31 Dec 1971

#### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by the 452 Operations Group prior to 27 Jun 1949

#### **Service Streamers**

##### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation: Germany, 7 Apr 1945

#### **EMBLEM**



Azure, fimbriated Or, a bomb Gules, point downward superimposed on lightning flashes Or, shaded Gules, in saltire.



Or, on a hurt spattered with mullets argent and having a border rayonne gules, a horse rampant bearing a knight in armor of the first and detailed brown, grasping a lance point to chief flying a pennant fesswise also of the first outlined azure. SIGNIFICANCE: The knight mounted on a horse symbolizes the Wing (nicknamed "Golden Knights") and its troop carrier mission. star-spattered blue disc and the golden yellow shield represent night and day operations, and the red sunburst is symbolic of "Sunny California, the home of the Wing. The emblem bears the Air Force colors, ultramarine blue and golden yellow.



452 Air Mobility Wing emblem: Or, on a hurt splattered with mullets argent and having a border rayonne gules, a horse rampant bearing a knight in armor of the first and detailed brown, grasping a lance point to chief flying a pennant fesswise also of the first outlined azure. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The knight mounted on a horse symbolizes the Wing (nicknamed "Golden Knights") and its troop carrier mission. The star-spattered blue disc and the golden yellow shield represent night and day operations, and the red sunburst is symbolic of "Sunny California," the home of the Wing. The emblem bears the Air Force colors, ultramarine blue and golden yellow.

#### **MOTTO**

LABOR AD FUTURUM—Work for the Future

#### **OPERATIONS**

Trained in the Reserve as a light bombardment wing, 1949-1950. Ordered to active service during the Korean War. On July 28, 1950, the Air Staff directed Headquarters Continental Air Command to order the 452d Bombardment Wing (Light) at Long Beach MAP in California, and the 437th Troop Carrier Wing (Medium) at O'Hare ZAP in Chicago to active military service on August 10 for twenty-one months unless sooner relieved. The headquarters was also directed to activate the motor vehicle, air police, food services, and installations squadrons originally withheld when the wings were organized in 1949. The reorganized wings were to be given sixty days' intense training before they deployed overseas. The 452d Light Bomb Wing was clearly the best prepared among the reserve wings. The first to be called primarily because each was collocated with another wing under its respective flying center. This collocation permitted the use of the second unit's personnel and equipment to replace shortages in its mobilized companion. In addition, in the expectation that the Korean emergency signaled a worldwide crisis, General Whitehead thought that some of his northern bases, including O'Hare at Chicago, should be cleared of troop carrier operations to make way for fighter units for air defense.

Two major problems dominated the mobilization of the 452d: the orders to reorganize the units concurrently with their mobilization, and the poor condition of individual and unit records. The guidance to retain all four of its flying squadrons while adding the four new support units more than doubled the 452d's authorized strength of 2,784. In addition to the personnel required to man the new component units, each flying squadron was authorized 12 additional combat crew members.

Personnel officials of both mobilized wings criticized their supporting flying centers for the chaotic

condition of the files that they received. Many of the individual files contained incorrect addresses for the reservists, and more than one hundred members of the 452d Bombardment Wing never received their mobilization telegrams. Airmen's records often contained incomplete forms, and many files were missing. Upon mobilization, the 452d Bombardment Wing ferried its B-26s and support aircraft to George AFB, California, and began accelerated aircrew training on August 10. Commanded by Brig. Gen. Luther W. Sweetser, Jr., the former Chief of the Reserve and National Guard Division on the Air Staff, the mobilized wing probably had more talent than any regular unit. As a civilian, its line chief, for example, held the same position at North American Aviation, and the maintenance and supply group commander was supply supervisor for Hughes Aircraft. As Douglas Aircraft Corporation employees, more than a hundred of the unit's mechanics were familiar with the B-26.

On October 15, 1950, the first of five echelons of the 452d left George AFB for Itazuke AB, Kyushu, Japan. The First B-26 of the 452d arrived at Itazuke on October 25, and two days later the wing flew its initial B-26 interdiction mission to Korea, exactly seventy-seven days after recall. On the last day of the month, the aircrews of the 452d learned they were in a real shooting war, as three Yakovlev fighters jumped one of their B-26s and a Mosquito controller near Yangsi. The B-26 crew shot down one of the Soviet-designed fighters, and P-51s arrived to destroy the other two.

Upon arrival in the theater, the 452d Bombardment Wing was the only B-26 unit conducting daylight operations. Until June 1951, it gave close support to ground units in Korea and engaged in interdiction of communist-held airfields, supply lines, and bridges, reaching peak operations in February 1951. The wing moved to Miho AB at Honshu, Japan, on December 10, and within a few days it suffered its first combat losses. Four B-26s and all their crews were lost, only one to hostile fire. One aircraft hit a cable on a power line during a low-level attack, a second flew into a mountain on takeoff in a snow squall, and a third dove out of the overcast into water. The fourth was knocked down by ground fire near Suncheon, Korea.

On April 23, 1951, the enemy began a spring offensive, and Fifth Air Force required an extensive effort of the 452d. For the next eight days the wing dispatched thirty to thirty-six sorties a day, getting maximum use from the approximately eighteen aircraft available each day. This required a refuel and rearm turnaround mission for each aircraft each day. The effort placed a heavy flying burden on all combat personnel as each crew was required to fly nine of ten days. As their effort began to exhaust the combat crews, pilots and observers serving in wing staff and support positions were pressed into service. This surge in operations also produced a sharp increase in maintenance activity as the aircraft sustained extensive battle damage. Three B-26s were lost behind enemy lines, and four others, only one of which was salvaged, sustained major battle damage.

Replacing General Sweetser on May 12, 1951, Col. Brooks A. Lawhon, swiftly stabilized the staggering unit. He entered in combat training many rated officers who had not been flying, getting them ready to take their places as combat crews. He also insisted on lead crew integrity and lead crew training, which soon proved its value. He reinstated military courtesy which, as it normally does, had accompanied morale out the door. He replaced key personnel as quickly as he could. As

for the crew rotation problem which had started it all, Maj. Gen. Edward J. Timberlake authorized him to ground the flyers when they got up to seventy-five missions, even at the risk of decreasing the number of combat sorties.

On June 18, 1951, the 452d completed converting to night operations. Needing more night effort, General Stratemyer readily accepted General Vandenberg's advice to convert the 452d to night operations. Following its changeover, the wing flew more than 9,000 night combat missions

On May 10, 1952, having served its prescribed twenty-one months, the 452d Bombardment Wing was relieved from active military service, inactivated at Pusan East, and returned to the control of the Continental Air Command as an Air Force Reserve organization.

Activated on 13 Jun 1952, absorbing the resources of the 921st Reserve Training Wing. Trained as a tactical reconnaissance wing, 1952-1955; as a tactical bombardment wing, 1955-1957; as a troop carrier wing, 1957-1966; as a military airlift wing, 1966-1972; as a tactical airlift wing, 1972-1976. From 1957 to 1976 the 452 participated in troop carrier and airlift joint training exercises with ground forces and performed routing, special transport, and humanitarian missions within the U.S. In the early 1960s began flying missions to Alaska, including airlift support for exercises and humanitarian relief missions for the 1964 earthquake in Alaska. Airlifted troops and cargo to the Dominican Republic during the 1965 contingency operation (Power Pack) to restore a stable government there. In 1965 began flying airlift missions worldwide, but especially to the Far East and Southeast Asia. Was the base host organization at Hamilton AFB, 1 Oct 1973-Dec 1975.

Moving to March AFB on January 12, 1976, with only 28 percent of its Hamilton complement, the 452d Air Refueling Wing accelerated its conversion timetable through the efforts of its own personnel and the cooperation of the host 22d Bomb Wing, which loaned the converting wing an aircraft that first day. So successful was the cooperative venture that on October 1, 1976, the official conversion date, the wing had 63 percent of its crews trained and ready for mission certification, five crew chiefs fully qualified, and 85 percent of its technicians trained. By the end of December 1976, the wing had received all its aircraft, and four of its eight formed aircrews were combat-ready.

Converted to an air refueling mission in 1976, the first reserve wing to directly support Strategic Air Command (SAC) bombers. From 1977 participated in tanker task forces worldwide. On 1 Oct 1977 a wing squadron (336th) began standing permanent alert duty with the active duty bombardment wing at March AFB, a duty which continued until cancellation of SAC alert on 27 Sep 1991. Deployed aircraft and volunteer aircrews and other personnel to Saudi Arabia in support of Desert Shield, beginning Aug 1990. The 336th ARS went on active duty in Dec 1990 and two squadron aircrews were among the first refuelers to launch on the first day of the Southwest Asia War (Desert Storm) against Iraq. Also, the Security Police Flight went on active duty and deployed to Saudi Arabia, Feb-Jun 1991.

In addition to its air refueling mission, the wing regained a worldwide airlift mission in 1994, taking over personnel and resources of the inactivating 445th Airlift Wing. Became the host wing at March



ARB on 1 Apr 1996.

8/11/2005 - The 452 Air Mobility Wing here received Air Force Reserve Command's first C-17 Globemaster III Aug. 9. Maj. Gen. Robert E. Duignan, 4th Air Force commander, and an aircrew from the 452 AMW made the flight from the Boeing's Long Beach, Calif., facility to the base. Eight more C-17s will be delivered to the unit by January to replace the wing's aging fleet of C-141 Starlifters, the last of which was retired earlier this year. The base is undergoing a \$50-million facilities upgrade and infrastructure improvement to accommodate the new aircraft. About half of the 452's aircrews and maintainers are already fully qualified on the C-17, said. When the 452 Air Mobility Wing welcomes eight C-17 later this year, the aircraft will be maintained in an environmentally friendly hangar that is larger than a football field and incorporates advanced construction technology. "We wanted it (the hangar) to appear it belonged here — have it blend in with its environment, as well as meet the standards of the 21st century by utilizing the technology available," said Tom Kempton, project manager for the contractor's design and build team. From planning to completion, the structure was designed to serve as a template for future C-17 hangars in the Air Force, Mr. Kempton said. The project began in January 2004 when a smaller hangar was torn down to make room for the new 50,000-square-foot building. Materials from the old hangar were sent to recycling facilities, which set the theme for construction of the new hangar. "This is a 'green' building," Mr. Kempton said. "Many of the materials used in this building are recycled, including foundation materials, side paneling and the tiles on the bathroom floor."

Also, light-reflective materials were used inside the hangar so minimal artificial lighting is necessary. The hangar's new technology starts at ground level. The floor, also light-reflective, was constructed with a new substance called Dry Shake. The substance is placed into the concrete to create an extremely hard and durable surface that never has to be painted and repels fluids like fuel and oil. The floor can simply be cleaned and waste products washed into the water treatment system, which recycles and treats water before dumping it into the base sewer system. Another feature of the hangar is a quieter work environment created by using sound-resistant side paneling, which was custom-built for the facility.

Even the building's landscaping uses a minimal amount of water. Brig. Gen. James Rubeor, 452 AMW commander, said he is pleased with the standard the new hangar sets. "(It) gives us great capabilities to house and service our C-17s," he said. "It incorporates state-of-the-art design and safety features that will assist our personnel in accomplishing the mission and protect our most valuable asset — our Airmen." The wing was scheduled to accept the building from the contractor in early June, more than two months ahead of the scheduled Aug. 9 delivery of the first C-17.

Officials from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., and the surrounding communities gather for a ceremony marking the arrival of the first C-17 to the base's 452 Air Mobility Wing Aug. 9. The 452 is the first Air Force Reserve Command unit that flies the C-17 to actually "own" the aircraft. The 446th Airlift Wing at McChord Air Force Base, Wash., and the 315th AW at Charleston AFB, S.C., both associate units, fly and maintain C-17s, but the planes belong to the active duty. Eight more C-17s will be delivered to March by January 2006 to replace the wing's fleet of C-141s, the last of which was retired earlier this year. Maj. Gen. Robert E. Duignan, Fourth Air Force commander, and an aircrew from the 452 AMW made the flight from Boeing's Long Beach, Calif., facility, where the aircraft was built, to the base. #44138 2005

When the 452 Air Mobility Wing welcomes eight C-17 Globemasters later this year, the aircraft will be maintained in an environmentally friendly hangar that is larger than a football field and incorporates advanced construction technology. “We wanted it (the hangar) to appear it belonged here — have it blend in with its environment, as well as meet the standards of the 21st century by utilizing the technology available,” said Tom Kempton, project manager for the contractor’s design and build team. From planning to completion, the structure was designed to serve as a template for future C-17 hangars in the Air Force, Mr. Kempton said. The project began in January 2004 when a smaller hangar was torn down to make room for the new 50,000-square-foot building. Materials from the old hangar were sent to recycling facilities, which set the theme for construction of the new hangar.

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1-30 Aug 2016 Personnel from the 452 AMW participated in exercise PATRIOT WARRIOR. During the exercise at Fort McCoy, WI, 452d personnel participated in contingency deployment training ranging from base buildup to operational capabilities. More than 11,000 members from the U.S. service branches and their reserve components participated along with British, Canadian and Saudi Arabian forces.

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.