

553rd AIR FORCE BAND



MISSION

The Air National Guard Band of the Mid-Atlantic is assigned to the dual missions of supporting regional Air National Guard units through performances in ceremonies, activities and recruiting tours; and public relations concert tours for the Air National guard and the "Total Air Force". As the only band in the Air Force Special Operations Command, the unit came to be known as "The AFSOC Band". To meet these needs, the band performs as a concert band, ceremonial band, "The Guardsmen" big band jazz ensemble, brass and woodwind quintets, jazz / popular combo, and "German" band.

The band is a traditional Air National Guard squadron. All thirty-six members are national guard members with civilian careers who meet one weekend a month to rehearse and perform. The band's ranks are filled with students, professional musicians, educators, administrators, salesmen, and a host of other professionals.

LINEAGE

553rd Air Force Band

STATIONS

Annville, PA

Harrisburg, Middletown, PA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

LTC Jere W. Fridy

CWO George J. Davey
2Lt Matthew J. Reese

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The Air National Guard Band of the Mid-Atlantic was originally formed on August 2, 1942 in Rapid City, South Dakota as the 53rd Army Air Forces Band. The succeeding years saw numerous name changes and reassignments. the band has been called the 553rd Army Band, 553rd Army Air Forces Band, and 53rd Wing Band. The band received its present military designation, the 553rd Air Force Band, Pennsylvania Air National Guard on September 26, 1947. Federal recognition was extended on April 21, 1949. In order to reflect the band's expanded geographic area of responsibility, on June 8, 2000 the band's name was changed to the Air National Guard Band of the Mid-Atlantic.

Recent years have found the band playing to capacity audiences in major venues throughout

Pennsylvania and in such distant places as Europe and the Caribbean. These performances include military ceremonies, such as the annual Pennsylvania Air National Guard "Flight of Freedom"; civic events, like the Governor's inauguration; clinics for young musicians; recruiting tours that include concerts in schools and universities, and large parades, such as the Pennsylvania Lions state convention parade. Annual concert tours have included Pennsylvania, Delaware, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Germany, Holland, France, the Azores, Antigua-West Indies, Norway, England and Denmark. It also recorded the soundtrack for a video program on the history of the Pennsylvania National Guard. In 1999, the band received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Although a slight misnomer, the 553rd Air Force Band is the only Air National Guard Band in Pennsylvania and is one of only twelve Air National Guard Bands in the United States. Attached to the 193rd Special Operations Group for administrative purposes, the 553rd has a worldwide reputation and is often compared to many active Air Force bands because of their professional sound. The majority of members of the 553rd are professional musicians and high school music directors and educators with the balance being either very long-time 553rd members or former Air Force band members. The purpose of Air National Guard bands are to assist in recruiting and public relations efforts and to keep morale high. Our 553rd provides a variety of music for civilian concerts in the United States as well as abroad, and the 553rd also performs for many military functions and has played several times at the Pentagon. The membership of the Band numbers 41 enlisted personnel and one officer, the commander and band director.

553rd Air Force Band — the 40-member unit performed a number of big band concerts from 29 June to 1 July in Florida at the request of the 1st Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, Florida. 1982

553rd Air Force Band performed six concerts in Pennsylvania during July before going to Hurlburt Field for six days of additional training. 1984

Air Force Order of Battle
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Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Sources