

27 SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

The 27 Special Operations Group is one of four groups assigned to the 27 Special Operations Wing. The group accomplishes global special operations taskings as an Air Force component member of the United States Special Operations Command. It conducts infiltration/exfiltration, combat support, tilt-rotor operations, helicopter aerial refueling, close air support, unmanned aerial vehicle operations, non-standard aviation, and other special missions. It directs the deployment, employment, training, and planning for squadrons that operate the AC-130H, AC-130W, PC-12, Do-328, M-28, CV-22, MC-130J, MQ-1, MQ-9 and provides operational support to flying operations.

Organization

- 27 Special Operations Support Squadron, provides operational support to flight operations
- 3 Special Operations Squadron, MQ-1 Predator
- 16 Special Operations Squadron, AC-130H Spectre gunship
- 33 Special Operations Squadron, MQ-9 Reaper
- 20 Special Operations Squadron, CV-22 Osprey
- 73 Special Operations Squadron, AC-130W Stinger
- 318 Special Operations Squadron, PC-12 and M-28
- 522 Special Operations Squadron, MC-130J Commando II
- 524 Special Operations Squadron, Do-328
- 43 Special Operations Squadron, provides specialized intelligence support
- 56 Intelligence Squadron provides, provides specialized intelligence support

- 551 Special Operations Squadron, provides specialized training on multiple weapons systems

LINEAGE

27 Bombardment Group (Light) established, 22 Dec 1939
Activated, 1 Feb 1940
Redesignated 27 Fighter-Bomber Group, 23 Aug 1943
Redesignated 27 Fighter Group, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Activated, 20 Aug 1946
Redesignated 27 Fighter-Escort Group, 1 Feb 1950
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 27 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985
Redesignated 27 Operations Group, 28 Oct 1991
Activated, 1 Nov 1991
Redesignated 27 Special Operations Group

STATIONS

Barksdale Field, LA, 1 Feb 1940
Hunter Field, GA, 7 Oct 1940-21 Oct 1941
Philippine Islands, 20 Nov 1941
Batchelor, Australia, Mar-4 May 1942
Hunter Field, GA, 4 May 1942
Key Field, MS, 14 Jul 1942
Hattiesburg, MS, 15 Aug 1942
Harding Field, LA, 25 Oct-21 Nov 1942
Ste-Barbe-du-Tlelat, Algeria, 26 Dec 1942
Nouvion, Algeria, Jan 1943
Ras el Ma, French Morocco, 4 Apr 1943
Korba, Tunisia, Jun 1943
Gela, Sicily, Jul 1943
Capaccio, Italy, Sep 1943
Guado AB, Italy, 4 Nov 1943
Pomigliano, Italy, 19 Jan 1944
Castel Volturno, Italy, 10 Apr 1944
Santa Maria Afld, Italy, 8 May 1944
La Banca, Italy, 7 Jun 1944
Ciampino, Italy, 12 Jun 1944
Serragia Airdrome, Corsica, Jul 1944
Le Luc AB, France, Aug 1944
Salon Afld, France, 30 Apr 1944
Loyettes, Airdrome, France, 11 Sep 1944
Tarquinia Airdrome, Italy, Oct 1944
Pontedera Airdrome, Italy, 3 Dec 1944
St Dizier, France, 22 Feb 1945

Toul-Ochey, France, 19 Mar 1945
Biblis, Germany, Apr 1945
Sandhofen, Germany, 24 Jun 1945
Echterdingen, Germany, 15 Sep-20 Oct 1945
Camp Shanks, NY, 6-7 Nov 1945
Fritzlar, Germany, 20 Aug 1946-25 Jun 1947
Andrews Field, MD, 25 Jun 1947
Kearney AAFld (later, AFB), NE, 16 Jul 1947
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 16 Mar 1949-11 Nov 1950
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 6 Jul 1951-16 Jun 1952
Cannon AFB, NM, 1 Nov 1991

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Taegu AB, South Korea, 5 Dec 1950-15 Aug 1951
Itazuke AB, Japan, 31 Jan-2 Jul 1951

ASSIGNMENTS

Southeast Air District (later, 3 Air Force), 1 Feb 1940
3 Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941
V Bomber Command, 20 Nov 1941 (under operational control of American-British-Dutch-Australian Command, Mar-4 May 1942)
3 Air Force, 4 May 1942
3 Bomber Command, 7 Jul 1942
III Ground Air (later, III Air) Support Command, 10 Aug 1942
Twelfth Air Force, 25 Dec 1942
XII Air Support (later, XII Tactical Air) Command, Jul 1943
XII Fighter (later, XXII Tactical Air) Command, 20 Sep 1944
63 Fighter Wing, 21 Feb 1945
XII Tactical Air Command, 30 Mar 1945
64 Fighter Wing, 7 Jul-Oct 1945
64 Fighter Wing, 20 Aug 1946
Strategic Air Command, 25 Jun 1947
Eighth Air Force, 16 Jul 1947
27 Fighter (later, 27 Fighter-Escort) Wing, 15 Aug 1947-16 Jun 1952
27 Fighter Wing, 1 Nov 1991

ATTACHMENTS

XII Tactical Command, 20 Sep-2 Oct 1944
First Tactical Air Force [Provisional]

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-24, 1941
A-20, 1941, 1942-1943
A-36, 1943-1944

P-40, 1944
P-47, 1944
P-47, 1946-1947
P (later, F)-51, 1947-1949
F-82, 1948-1950
F-84, 1950-1951
F-111, 1991-1996
EF-111, 1992-1998
F-16, 1995

COMMANDERS

Col Clarence L. Tinker, 1 Feb 1940
Lt Col William B. Wright, Mar 1941
Col Guy McNeil, 5 Jul 1941
Col John H. Davies. Nov 1941
Maj Alexander R. Sewall, 18 Dec 1941-unkn
Lt Col Harry F. Van Leuven, 14 Jul 1942
Lt Col John D. Stevenson, 11 Apr 1943
Col Dorr E. Newton, 6 Aug 1943
Col Stephen B. Mack, 22 Apr 1944
Col William R. Nevitt, 11 Sep 1944-7 Nov 1945
Col C. T. Edwinston, 20 Aug 1946
Col Robert P. Montgomery, 18 Nov 1946
Col C. T. Edwinston, 24 Feb 1947
Col Edwin A. Doss, 15 Aug 1947
Col Cy Wilson, 21 Jan 1948
Col Donald J. M. Blakeslee, 7 Dec 1950
Lt Col William E. Bertram, 2 Mar 1951
None (not manned) 6 Aug 1951-16 Jun 1952
Col Donald A. Lamontagne, 1 Nov 1991
Col Thomas G. Runge, 20 May 1992
Col Gale W. Larson, 21 Oct 1994
Col Loyd S. Utterback, 14 Oct 1995
Col Phillip M. Breedlove, 25 Jul 1997
Col Jay H. Lindell, 28 May 1999
Col Bennett M. Bitler, 18 Jun 2001
Col William P. West
Col Robert Orris

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Philippine Islands
East Indies
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Korea
CCF Intervention
First UN Counteroffensive
CCF Spring Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Philippine Islands, 7 Dec 1941-[Apr] 1942
Philippine Islands, 8-22 Dec 1941
Philippine Islands, 6 Jan-8 Mar 1942
Italy, 10 Sep 1943
France, 4 Sep 1944
Korea, 26 Jan-21 Apr 1951

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Apr 1992-31 May 1993
1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
9 Nov 1950-31 May 1951

EMBLEM



Per bend Azure and Or, in sinister chief a dexter hand clenched couped at the wrist; in dexter base a magnolia blossom, leave all Argent fimbriated and garnished Sable, all within a diminished bordure of the second. (Approved for 27 Group, 12 Sep 1940 and for the 27 Wing 11 Jul 1952)



MOTTO

INTELLIGENT STRENGTH

OPERATIONS

Activated for bombardment operations on 1 Feb 1940. Departed from the port of San Francisco on the U.S.A.T. President Coolidge and arrived in Manila, 20 Nov 1941. Transferred to Clark Field, PI, on the same day. The group's A-24 aircraft, which had not arrived, were diverted to Australia after the Japanese attack on the Philippines. The group's commander and 20 pilots who were flown from Luzon to Australia to get the aircraft did not return because of the continued Japanese advance in the Philippines.

The remainder of the wing evacuated to the Bataan Peninsula, and arriving there on Thanksgiving Day, formed the 2nd Battalion (27 Bombardment Group) Provisional Infantry

Regiment (Air Corp). For the 99 days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, until their surrender to the Japanese, they became the only Air Force unit in history to fight as an infantry regiment. They also had the dubious distinction of being the only unit to be taken captive in whole. After their surrender they were forced to endure the infamous Bataan Death March. Of the approximately 880 airmen who were taken, less than half survived captivity. Major Davies, his small group, and the few remaining wing personnel who evacuated Bataan before its fall were assigned to the 3rd Bombardment Group. The group received three Distinguished Unit Citations for their heroic efforts in the Philippines, late 1941 and early 1942.

On 4 May 1942, the 27 BG (L) transferred back to Hunter Field without men or equipment. Six months later the group was once again ready for combat. Maintenance and support personnel went by sea to North Africa while aircrews and A-20s flew to South America then across to Africa. These aircraft and aircrews were transferred to the 47th Bombardment Group. The 27 began to rebuild for the third time with A-36 dive-bombers. Finally, the re-formed 27 flew its first combat missions of the war on 6 June 1943.

Flying A-36s, P-40s, and P-47s, the 27 Fighter-Bomber Group, as it was redesignated, fought the rest of the war in Europe. Its list of battles is a chronology of the war in Southern Europe. It includes the invasions of Sicily, Italy, Salerno, Southern France, and Anzio. It participated in the taking of Monte Cassino, the drive on Rome, attacked the Siegfried Line, and supported the Allied drive into Germany.

Trained for fighter operations in Germany, 20 Aug 1946-25 Jun 1947, when it was transferred, without personnel and equipment, to the United States for service with the Strategic Air Command.

Moved to the Far East in 1950 for temporary duty with Far East Air Forces during the Korean War. Operating from bases in South Korea and later Japan, flew missions in support of ground forces, earning another DUC for missions between 26 Jan and 21 Apr 1951. Among these missions was close support of the largest paratroop landing in the Korean War and escort for B-29s on raids over North Korea, including combat with enemy MIG-15 fighters. Returned to the United States in Jul 1951. Not operational after Aug 1951, when its squadrons were attached for operational control to the wing.

Just prior to noon on November 9, 1950, a sudden flurry of hushed whispers swept through the headquarters building at Bergstrom Air Force Base. By noon, the whispers had died and a significant silence echoed the halls. There was an immediate meeting of staff officers. Then a conference of section officers. Finally a conference of non-coms. Typewriters pounded. Telephones rang. Mimeograph machines hummed with activity. Something big was in the making. Through the night the activity continued. Warehouse doors, usually closed to those without reams of paper work, seemed suddenly and miraculously opened. The hangar and the flight lines were flooded with improvised lighting facilities. Thunderjet engines roared through the darkness. Trailer trucks and forklifts swarmed about the base like ants around an anthill. The 27 Fighter-Escort Group had been alerted for overseas. Effective date of deployment was

less than 48 hours off, November 11. The F-84 Thunderjets were entering the United Nations' police action in Korea.

Pilots and crew chiefs of the 27 Fighter-Escort Group had been less than a week back from their second trans-Atlantic flight. In September and October, the Group had ferried a total of 180 Thunderjets to USAF units in Germany, flying the North Atlantic route. On the same day, the initial troop movements began. Maintenance personnel, Fighter Group crew chiefs, and a handful of support personnel were airlifted to San Diego, to accompany the pilots and Thunderjets on the overwater phase of the move. The first shipment of Thunderjets left California aboard the USS Bairoka just three days later, on November 14. On November 16, Colonel Ashley B. Packard and his staff left Bergstrom via air for the Far East. The balance of Wing Personnel was being moved daily by air from Bergstrom to Travis AF Base, California for air transportation to Japan. On the same day that Colonel Packard left, the second shipment of Thunderjets departed California aboard the USS Bataan. By November 27, the balance of the jet fighters was on the Pacific aboard the USS Cape Esperance.

Flying from California to Hickman AFB, Hawaii, to Wake Island, to Tokyo, about fifty percent of the Wing personnel were in Japan before the arrival of the Thunderjets. These airmen and officers were staged at Yokota AFB, a few miles outside Tokyo, where field equipment, winter clothing, and war supplies were issued. On November 25, the first 27 Fighter-Escort Wing personnel were airlifted to Kimpo AFB, Korea, and a few miles outside Seoul. The first Thunderjets arrived in Japan on November 30 at Yokasuka. They were unloaded by the Fighter-Group crew members and the 27's 4015th Organizational Maintenance Squadron personnel. The planes were moved from Yokasuka to Kizu-razu, to be readied for combat. The 27 was attached to the Fifth Air Force for operations upon arrival in the Far East. Fifth Air Force, on December 1, ruled that the Wing would be divided into two sections — an advanced echelon to operate from Korea, and a rear echelon to maintain the aircraft and administration in Japan.

These same orders designated the Korean phase of operations to be conducted from an airstrip at Taegu, Korea, necessitating a redeployment of personnel from Kimpo. Colonel Packard decided to remain with the advanced echelon, which consisted of the 27 Fighter-Escort Group and a minimum of support personnel. Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the deputy Wing Commander, was to take charge of the rear echelon. Rear echelon troops were moved from the staging area at Yokota AFB to Itazuke AFB, Japan, and immediate maintenance operations were begun.

On December 5, Colonel Donald J. M. Blakeslee, then commanding the Fighter Group, led the first flight of Thunderjets from Itazuke AFB to Taegu. The next day, the Thunderjet pilots flew an indoctrination flight with fighter pilots of the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing, also at Taegu at the time.

On Pearl Harbor Day — December 7 — the first Thunderjet operations began. A flight of four Thunderjets, led by Colonel Blakeslee, flew armed reconnaissance over enemy territory in the Chinnampo area on the west coast of Korea. Picking targets of opportunity, the flight dropped

32 5-inch rockets and expended 7200 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition strafing enemy positions, knocking out several enemy locomotives, a railroad marshalling yard, sinking a loaded barge in the vital shipping area near Chinnampo, and setting fire to three enemy-held villages.

In late January, after nearly two months of operations, Fifth Air Force moved the Thunderjets from Taegu to Itazuke, where the rear echelon maintenance program was operative. This move was the result of the long range effectiveness of the versatile Thunderjets. Taegu was a small airstrip, and there were a number of fighter units stationed there. The F-80 Shooting Stars, the World War II famous F-51s, and the aircraft of allied United Nations countries could not boast the long range of the Thunderjet. For that reason, the F-84s and the 27 Fighter-Escort Group moved once again.

The last missions from Taegu were flown on January 31. On the morning of February 1, operations began from Itazuke, and have continued from there until the arrival of the replacement, 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing. The 27 Fighter-Escort Wing flew 12,000 combat missions which totaled 25,000 combat hours.

The 27 was phased out of combat on July 1st. Some of the pilots continued to fly missions with the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing which replaced the 27.

About September 1st the 27 was back at its home station at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, Texas.

Col Ashley B. Packard, the Wing Commander, was killed in the crash of a T-33, and Col Raymond F. Rudell assumed command of the 27 on 2 May 1951.

Added electronic combat mission to its fighter role in Jul 1992. From late 1992 to 1998, served as the only Air Force group with F-111 or EF-111 aircraft. Took part in numerous training exercises and deployed personnel and aircraft periodically to southwestern Asia to enforce no-fly zones over Iraq.

In 1998, began training Republic of Singapore F-16 pilots.

After terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D. C. in Sep 2001, began deploying personnel and aircraft in operations associated with the Global War on Terror.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

Created: 13 Jul 2024

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

27 Fighter Escort Wing, "Just Famous." Taylor Made Armed Forces Publications. Dallas, TX. @1952