

AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



MISSION

The command's core missions include battlefield air operations; agile combat support; aviation foreign internal defense; information operations; precision aerospace fires; psychological operations; specialized air mobility; specialized refueling; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

AFSOC special operations missions ranging from precision application of firepower, to infiltration, exfiltration, resupply and refueling of SOF operational elements. AFSOC's mission also includes airborne radio and television broadcast for psychological operations, as well as aviation foreign internal defense instructors to provide other governments military expertise for their internal development. The command's special tactics squadrons combine combat controllers, special operations weathermen and pararescuemen with other service SOF to form versatile joint special operations teams.

LINEAGE

Twenty-Third Air Force established, 10 Feb 1983

Activated, 1 Mar 1983

Redesignated Air Force Special Operations Command, with the status of a major command,
22 May 1990

STATIONS

Scott AFB, IL

Hurlburt Field, FL

ASSIGNMENTS

Military Airlift Command

COMMANDERS

Maj Gen William J. Mall, Jr., 1 Mar 83
Maj Gen Robert B. Patterson, 20 Sep 85
Maj Gen Thomas E. Eggers, 7 Sep 89
Maj Gen Bruce L. Fister, 21 Jun 91
Maj Gen James L. Hobson, Jr., 22 Jul 94
Maj Gen Charles R. Holland, 9 Jul 97
Lt Gen Maxwell C. Bailey, 5 Aug 99
Lt Gen Paul V. Hester, 16 Jan 02
Lt Gen Michael W. Wooley, 1 Jul 04
Lt Gen Donald C. Wurster, 27 Nov 2007

EMBLEM





Sable a hurt fimbriated Argent charged with a mullet of the like pierced Gules above and between a dagger, handle Or blade Argent winged of the like (Silver Gray), all within a diminished bordure Yellow. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND" in Blue letters. **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 black background symbolizes the night, the time when the Command conducts its operations. The winged dagger represents military preparedness and swift and silent mobilization of forces. The blue disc with star suggests the heritage of Air Force Special Operations.

OPERATIONS

HQ USAF established this command to assume responsibility for special operations resources, budgeting and training. The command serves as the air component of United States Special Operations Command.

In Dec 1982, the Air Force transferred responsibility for Air Force special operations from Tactical Air Command to Military Airlift Command.

1 Mar 83 The Twenty-Third Air Force (23 AF) was activated at Scott AFB, Illinois, and Major General William J. Mall, Jr., assumed command. This new numbered air force was charged with the worldwide missions of combat rescue, special operations, weather reconnaissance and aerial sampling, security support for intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) sites, training of USAF helicopter and HC-130 crewmen, and pararescue training. Major subordinate units were ARRS and the Second Air Division. Hurlburt Field, FL, became a responsibility of the Twenty-Third Air Force. The Twenty-Third Air Force was initially assigned a total of 7,976 personnel and 336 aircraft. BG Philip S. Prince became Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service Commander, and Col Hugh L. Cox assumed command of the newly activated Second Air Division.

In Aug 1989, Gen Duane H. Cassidy, MAC Commander in Chief, divested 23rd AF of its non-special operations units. Thus, 23rd AF served a dual role—still reporting to MAC, but also functioning as the air component to USSOCOM.

While supporting the Global War on Terror and operations in Iraq, AFSOC welcomed the movement of the USAF's continental U.S. based rescue forces from Air Combat Command effective 1 Oct 2003.

On 1 Sep 2005, AFSOC created its warfighting Headquarters as part of an Air Force wide initiative to provide enhanced warfighting capabilities to achieve our nation's military objectives and support unified combatant commanders' strategic objectives across the full range of military operations.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 27 Feb 2023
Updated:

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