

## 438 AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING



### MISSION

The 438th AEW trains, advises and assists today's Afghan Air Force in order to develop its operational capability. The AAF operates the Mi-17 transport helicopter, Mi-35 attack helicopter and C-27 Spartan. Until June 2011, the AAF will operate the An-32.

### LINEAGE

438 Troop Carrier Wing, Medium established, 10 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to active service, 10 Mar 1951  
Inactivated, 14 Mar 1951  
Redesignated 438 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 26 May 1952  
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952  
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957  
Redesignated 438 Military Airlift Wing, and activated, 27 Dec 1965  
Organized, 8 Jan 1966  
Redesignated 438 Airlift Wing  
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1994  
Redesignated 438 Air Expeditionary Wing and converted to provisional status, 4 Dec 2001

### STATIONS

Offutt AFB, NE, 27 Jun 1949-14 Mar 1951  
General Billy Mitchell Field, WI, 15 Jun 1952  
McGuire AFB, NJ, 8 Jan 1966

### ASSIGNMENTS

Tenth Air Force, 27 Jun 1949-14 Mar 1951  
Tenth Air Force, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957

Military Air Transport Service (later, Military Airlift Command), 27 Dec 1965  
Twenty-First Air Force, 8 Jan 1966

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

T-6, 1949-1951  
C-46, 1949-1951  
T-6, 1952-1954  
C-46, 1953  
F-51, 1953-1954  
T-33, 1954-1957  
F-80, 1954-1957  
F-86, 1957  
C-130, 1966-1968  
C-135, 1966-1967  
C-141, 1967

### **COMMANDERS**

Col Robert E. Flesher, 27 Jun 1949-14 Mar 1951  
Inactive, 14 Mar 51  
Col Robert E. Haynes, 15 Jun 1952  
Lt Col Joseph J. Lingle, 19 Sep 1956-Nov 1957  
Inactive, 16 Nov 57  
None (Not Manned), 27 Dec 1965-7 Jan 1966  
Brig Gen Roland J. Barnick, 8 Jan 1966  
Col Gilbert G. Smith, Jr., 25 Jul 1967 (Acting), 1 Aug 1967 (Permanent)  
Brig Gen John H. Herring, Jr., 1 Aug 1968  
Col Gilbert G. Smith, Jr., 14 Jun 1969  
Brig Gen John W. Harrell, Jr., 11 Aug 1969  
Brig Gen Keith L. Christensen, 30 Sep 1970  
Brig Gen George M. Wentsch, 15 Jun 1972  
Brig Gen Emil N. Block, Jr., 28 Jan 1974  
Col James L. Gardner, Jr., 1 May 1976  
Col Duane H. Erickson, 16 Feb 78  
Col Allen G. Myers Iii, 26 Feb 79  
Col (Brig Gen) Larry D. Wright, 9 Feb 81  
Col John T. Lawell, 6 Feb 83  
Col (Brig Gen) James J. Leclair, 22 Jun 83  
Col Jerold L. Weiss, 13 Aug 85  
Col Frank M. Pearce, 12 Jun 87  
Col William B. Morrison Iii, 13 Jul 89  
Col Kirby A. Woehst, 19 Jul 90  
Brig Gen George A. Gray Iii, #1993  
Brig Gen Tim Ray, #2012  
Brig Gen Michael D. Rothstein

## HONORS

### Service Streamers

### Campaign Streamers

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

### Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jun 1966-30 Apr 1968

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Apr-31 Oct 1968

### EMBLEM



438<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing emblem: A shield per fess nebuly abaisse, azure and argent, two Ranches representing hemispheres proper, latitude and longitude lines of the first, superimposed with three stylized aircraft, of the second, flying in pale, detail of the third. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The field of the emblem is deep blue and white, with a nibbly line indicating the clouds in the sky. The three aircraft are represented flying from one hemisphere to another, and it indicates the global mission of the 438th Military Airlift Wing. (Approved, 16 May 1966)



438<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing emblem

438<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing emblem: Per bend sinister Purpure and Argent, a globe per bend sinister Argent and Azure, land masses and grid lines counterchanged, fimbriated Or, in base a flight symbol of the first point to dexter emitting an 'S' shaped ribbon contrail Yellow, fimbriated Purpure, doubled White Barry Purple palewise behind the globe, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "438TH AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING" in Blue letters. 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 shield division suggests night and day and denotes the unit's ability to conduct operations twenty-four hours a day. The globe symbolizes the global mission of the unit and emphasizes the ability to complete the mission anywhere in the world. The lashing spear, with twisting contrails, symbolizes the speed and accuracy of the Group's combat capability. (Approved August 19, 1993 and modified on January 28, 2009)

#### **MOTTO**

FIDELITAS PROELIIS DOMIQUE—Dependability in war and peace

#### **OPERATIONS**

The wing trained in the Reserve for troop carrier operations, Jun 1949-Mar 1951 and for fighter-bomber missions, Jun 1952-Nov 1957.

Replaced the 1611th Air Transport Wing, Heavy, in Jan 1966. Transported military cargo, mail, and passengers worldwide, particularly in the eastern United States, Atlantic, European, and Mediterranean areas, with frequent special missions to the Arctic, the Antarctic, South America, the Far East, and to the Southeast Asia combat area during the conflict there.

The group flew global transport missions for the Military Airlift Command between Sep 1978 and Jun 1980. Between Nov 1991 and Oct 1994, the group participated in numerous

contingency, humanitarian airlift, and peacekeeping operations around the world.

Two Air Expeditionary Wings will operate in Afghanistan as part of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the new mission that began Jan. 1 following the end of US combat operations there, said Air Forces Central Command spokesman Lt. Col. Tadd Sholtis. The 438th AEW will be based in the capital of Kabul, with personnel at other locations as well. It will "train, advise, and assist" the Afghan Air Force in developing "a sustainable air capability" supporting the 350,000-strong indigenous Afghan security forces, said Sholtis. The missions it will teach include airlift, aeromedical evacuation, tactical reconnaissance, and ground attack. The 455th AEW, based at Bagram Air Base, but with satellite locations, "will maintain a counterterrorism capability in Afghanistan" targeting the remnants of al Qaeda and preventing either an al Qaeda "resurgence" or "external plotting against US targets or the homeland," he added. Members of the Taliban won't be targeted per se, but "we may provide combat enabler support" to the Afghan security forces "in limited operations" to "prevent detrimental strategic effects to Afghan forces or operations," Sholtis said. US Air Force personnel will account for about 20 percent of the 13,000 US troops remaining in Afghanistan, Sholtis noted. 2015

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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#### Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.