

EIGHTH AIR FORCE (AIR FORCES STRATEGIC)



MISSION

LINEAGE

VIII Bomber Command established, 19 Jan 1942
Activated, 1 Feb 1942
Redesignated Eighth Air Force, 22 Feb 1944
Redesignated Eighth Air Force (Air Forces Strategic), 3 Jun 2008

The initial Eighth Air Force became the United States Air Forces in Europe. The present Eighth Air Force began its existence as VIII Bomber Command and received its current designation when the original Eighth Air Force redesignated United States Strategic Air Forces (USSTAF).

STATIONS

Langley Field, VA, 1 Feb 1942
Savannah, GA, 10 Feb 1942
Daws Hill, England, 23 Feb 1942
High Wycombe, England, May 15, 1942
Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, July 16, 1945
MacDill Field, Florida, June 7, 1946
Fort Worth Army Airfield (later, Griffiss AFB [briefly]; Carswell AFB), TX, 1 Nov 1946
Westover AFB, MA, Jun 1955
Andersen AFB, Guam, 1 Apr 1970
Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Jan 1975

ASSIGNMENTS

Air Force Combat Command
U.S. Army Strategic Air Forces, 16 Jul 1945
Strategic Air Command, 7 Jun 1946
Air Combat Command, 1 Jun 1992

COMMANDERS

Maj Gen Ira C. Eaker, 23 Feb 1942
Brig Gen Newton Longfellow, 2 Dec 1942
Maj Gen Frederick L. Anderson, 1 Jul 1943
Lt Gen James H. Doolittle, 6 Jan 1944
Maj Gen William E. Kepner, 10 May 1945
Maj Gen Westside T. Larson, 21 Jun 1945
Lt Gen James H. Doolittle, 19 Jul 1945
Maj Gen Earle E. Partridge, 12 Sep 1945
Brig Gen Patrick W. Timberlake, 30 Nov 1945-Unkn
Col Neil B. Harding, 16 Aug 1946
Brig Gen Roger M. Ramey, 1 Nov 1946
Maj Gen Clements McMullen, 12 Nov 1946
Maj Gen Roger M. Ramey, 16 Dec 1946
Maj Gen Archie J. Old Jr, 15 Jun 1950
Lt Gen Samuel E. Anderson, 14 Aug 1950
Maj Gen John B. Montgomery, 8 May 1953
Maj Gen James C. Selser, J.R, 13 Jun 1955
Maj Gen Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., 6 Aug 1955
Lt Gen Hunter Harris Jr., 1 Oct 1961
Lt Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro, 1 Oct 1962
Lt Gen Horace M. Wade, 1 Dec 1964
Lt Gen David Wade, 1 Aug 1966
Lt Gen William B. Kieffer, 1 Mar 1967
Lt Gen Alvan C. Gillem II, 1 Apr 1970
Brig Gen Leo C. Lewis, 11 Jul 1970
Lt Gen Sam J. Byerley, 1 Aug 1970
Lt Gen Gerald W. Johnson, 14 Sep 1971
Lt Gen George H. Mckee, 1 Oct 1973
Maj Gen Charles F. Minter, Sr., 30 Aug 1974
Lt Gen Richard M. Hoban, 1 Jan 1975
Lt Gen James E. Hill, 1 Nov 1976
Lt Gen Richard L. Lawson, 1 Jul 1977
Lt Gen Edgar S. Harris, Sr., 28 Jul 1978
Lt Gen Robert T. Herres, 28 Jul 1981
Lt Gen William C. Campbell, 15 Oct 1982
Lt Gen Kenneth L. Peek, Jr., 15 Aug 1984
Lt Gen James P. Mccarthy, 2 Feb 1987
Lt Gen Ellie G. Shuler, Jr., 26 Mar 1988

Lt Gen Martin J. Ryan, Jr., 22 May 1991
Lt Gen Stephen B. Crocker, 7 Aug 1993
Lt Gen Phillip J. Ford, 6 Mar 1996
Lt Gen Ronald C. Marcotte, 14 Aug 1998
Lt Gen Thomas J. Keck, 13 Jan 2000
Lt Gen Bruce A. Carlson, 17 May 2002
Lt Gen Kevin P. Chilton, 10 Aug 2005
Lt Gen Robert J. Elder, Jr., 13 Jun 2006
Maj Gen Floyd L. Carpenter, 1 Jun 2009

HONORS

Service Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device
1 Jun 2001-31 May 2003

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1987
1 Jul 1988-30 Jun 1990
1 Jul 1990-30 Jun 1991
1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997
1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999
1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm
1 Apr 1970-28 Jan 1973

EMBLEM



Azure, in the lower lobe of the winged Arabic numeral "8" or a mullet throughout argent charged with a torteaux. (Approved, 20 May 1943; revised, 31 Jul 1958)

On a blue disc 2 1/2 inches (6.35 cm) in diameter a winged numeral "8" 1 3/4 inches (4.45 cm) in height in golden orange, in lower lobe of numeral a white five-pointed star charged with a red disc. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and golden orange are the colors of the Army Air Forces. The winged figure 8 represents the power and mobility of the Eighth Air Force. The white five-pointed star with the red center is the Army Air Force star.



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Planned and executed daylight-precision and strategic bombing in the European Theater of Operations from 1942-1945. After the end of combat operations in Europe, moved to Okinawa in July 1945, to train new bomber groups for combat against Japan. Returned to the continental U.S. in June 1946 and focused on building up and commanding strategic airpower under Strategic Air Command. Transferred to Guam in April 1970 to oversee bombardment operations in Southeast Asia; directed LINEBACKER missions in 1972-1973. After returning stateside in 1975, commanded and administered strategic aircraft, missiles and other assigned forces; maintained strategic readiness and provided conventional forces to theater commands. In 2001, assumed additional responsibility as an information operations and information warfare command element.

In early 1950, SAC's three numbered air forces were somewhat distinct. The Eighth was concerned primarily with medium and heavy bombers, the Fifteenth concentrated on medium bombers, and the Second devoted its attentions almost exclusively to reconnaissance activities. Expansion and the integration of B-36s and B-50s into the command created the need for a more balanced organization. Geographic factors also prompted the need for reorganization. Headquarters Second Air Force, located in Louisiana, controlled units at Fairfield-Suisun AFB, California, while Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, located in California, controlled units at MacDill AFB, Florida. On 1 Apr, the SAC forces were realigned. Each numbered air force was assigned both bomber and reconnaissance aircraft and was assigned units and bases in rather specific geographical regions of the United States the Second in the eastern part, the Eighth in the central region, and the Fifteenth in the western area.

By 1955, the New York-New England area was becoming increasingly important to SAC operations. Dow and Loring AFBs, Maine, had been supporting F-84 and B-36 wings, respectively, for some time; Westover AFB, Massachusetts, which became a SAC installation on 1 Apr, was being groomed to support tankers and bombers; and new B-47/KC-97 bases were being built at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Plattsburgh, New York. In line with this expansion, SAC realigned its three numbered air forces and, effective 13 June, moved Headquarters Eighth Air Force from Carswell AFB, Texas, to Westover. Following this realignment, SAC's numbered air forces were generally responsible for units and bases in the following geographical sections of the country: Second—southeast (including Texas); Eighth—northeast and central; Fifteenth—southwest and west.

Effective 1 January 1959, SAC realigned several bases and units between the Second and Eighth Air Forces. One base and its assigned units were transferred from the Eighth to the Fifteenth Air Force. Basically, this realignment placed the Eighth Air Force in control of forces in the eastern section of the United States and Second Air Force in command of forces in the central section. The Fifteenth's area of responsibility remained in the western section of the country.

On 1 July, SAC reorganized its three numbered air forces in the United States. This realignment was effected primarily to correct an imbalance in the assignment of missiles. Due to restrictive geological factors in the eastern part of the United States, the Eighth Air Force's role in the SAC ICBM program had been limited to one squadron of Atlas F missiles at Plattsburgh AFB, New York. With additional B-47 and KC-97 units of the Eighth Air Force scheduled to be inactivated in the following years, the imbalance of forces among the three numbered air forces would be accentuated. Completely disregarding whatever influence geographical factors may have had upon a numbered air force's area of responsibility, SAC directed that its three numbered air forces be realigned on 1 July, an action which overnight plunged the Eighth Air Force into an operational ICBM environment in the Midwestern and Rocky Mountain regions of the United States. From the Fifteenth, the Eighth acquired a tenant Titan I wing at Lowry AFB, Colorado, and Francis E. Warren AFB, Wyoming, with an operational Atlas wing. With the acquisition of F. E. Warren, a Minuteman wing was activated there. From the Second Air Force, the Eighth acquired a Titan II wing, which would begin receiving missiles shortly thereafter at McConnell

AFB, Kansas, and Whiteman AFB, Missouri, together with its embryonic Minuteman wing.

Because of its illustrious history, primarily its World War II record in Europe, the Eighth Air Force was not inactivated as originally announced. It was preserved by transferring the numerical designation to Guam. Specifically, the following actions were taken to effect this change: Effective 1 April, Headquarters Eighth Air Force moved without personnel and equipment to Andersen AFB, Guam. Concurrently, Headquarters 3d Air Division, which had been at Andersen since 1954, was inactivated and its personnel and functions were absorbed by Headquarters Eighth Air Force.

Effective 1 January 1975, Headquarters Eighth Air Force moved without personnel and equipment from Andersen AFB, Guam, to Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, where it absorbed the functions and personnel of Headquarters Second Air Force, which was inactivated. Headquarters Eighth Air Force had been located at Andersen since 1 April 1970, when it moved there from Westover AFB, Massachusetts, in order to direct SAC combat operations in Southeast Asia. At the time of this action, Headquarters USAF planned to relocate Headquarters Eighth Air Force to Barksdale and to inactivate Headquarters Second Air Force as soon as SAC operations in Southeast Asia had subsided. Retention of Eighth Air Force in SAC and inactivation of Second Air Force was done in order to perpetuate the Eighth's colorful lineage, specifically its World War II combat history. Second Air Force had no World War II combat experience.

The Air Force's lead organization for nuclear-capable bombers, 8th Air Force at Barksdale AFB, La., will officially shed its non-bomber wings on Oct. 1 as part of its transition to Air Force Global Strike Command by next February, Maj. Gen. Floyd Carpenter, commander of 8th Air Force at Barksdale AFB, La., said Tuesday at AFA's Air & Space Conference. The units that Eighth will lose include the 9th Reconnaissance Wing at Beale AFB, Calif., which flies the U-2; the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, Neb., operator of RC-135 Rivet Joints; the 116th Air Control Wing at Robins AFB, Ga., the E-8C Joint STARS unit; and the 552nd ACW at Tinker AFB, Okla., an E-3 AWACS organization. Carpenter said the reconnaissance assets will move under 12th Air Force, while the remaining wings exiting 8th AF will henceforth be under 9th AF. The three wings remaining under 8th AF are: Barksdale's 2nd Bomb Wing, a B-52H unit; the 5th BW, another B-52H organization, based at Minot AFB, N.D., and the 509th BW, USAF's sole operator of B-2, at Whiteman AFB, Mo.

A new planning cell at Air Force Global Strike Command's 8th Air Force is in charge of coordinating standoff weapon assets across the Department of Defense, from JASSMs to Navy Tomahawks, in order to get better results in the opening stages of an air campaign. The Standoff Munitions Application Center (SMAC) is now up and running at the 608th Air and Space Operations Center at Barksdale AFB, La., 8th Air Force Commander Maj. told Air Force Magazine Friday. The effort pulls together the operational planning elements for standoff weapons from the Air Force, Navy, and other services, in order to help better coordinate bomber-launched cruise missiles, to air-launched jammers and Tomahawks. As US Strategic Command's air component and functional commander for global strike, Vander Hamm can now coordinate and support standoff weapons operations. A given command may have a handful of

personnel who can plan and coordinate standoff assets, but now the SMAC can consolidate this expertise and provide teams to deploy and directly support operations should the need arise. "These assets are very expensive, and this is to help pull them together from an operational planning perspective," Vander Hamm said. Using tools available via his STRATCOM authorities, Vander Hamm can utilize electronic warfare, cyber, and space assets to "better optimize these weapons." 2014

The 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess AFB, Texas, and the 28th BW at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., will hold realignment ceremonies on Monday, marking the transition of the B-1 fleet from Air Combat Command to Air Force Global Strike Command. The move means the Air Force's entire bomber fleet-the B-52, B-2, and B-1-will be consolidated under the command of 8th Air Force, but for the roughly 7,000 airmen involved, the transition should be relatively seamless, 8th AF (Air Forces Strategic) Commander Maj. Gen. Richard Clark told Air Force Magazine. "They will wear a different patch, but aside from that it won't be a significant change," said Clark. However, "behind the scenes, we'll have more consolidated advocacy for long-range strike, and a consolidated center for strategic thought for long-range strike and standoff weapons." Even though all three of the service's bombers are "unique weapon systems," Clark said "the core competency of long-range strike is something common to all" and the B-1 transition will help "build some synergy" within the bomber community. He said, "in general this is a really great move for the Air Force," one that brings 8th AF "back to our heritage."2015

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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.