

55 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

Provide premier airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance along with command and control forces to national leadership, intelligence partners and warfighters.

The 55 OG is responsible for training aircrews and providing support to Combatant Commanders, treaty monitoring, and command and control capabilities for the President of the United States and Secretary of Defense. To accomplish these missions, the 55 OG is comprised of 12 squadrons and 1 Detachment.

The 3,100 plus member strong 55 OG operates 17 RC-135V/W RIVET JOINT, 4 E-4B NIGHTWATCH, 3 RC-135S COBRA BALL, 2 RC-135U COMBAT SENT, 2 WC-135C/W CONSTANT PHOENIX, 2 OC-135B OPEN SKIES and 3 TC-135W aircraft valued at \$5.2B.

LINEAGE

55 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) established, 20 Nov 1940

Activated, 15 Jan 1941

Redesignated 55 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) (Twin Engine), 31 Jan 1942

Redesignated 55 Fighter Group (Twin Engine), 15 May 1942

Redesignated 55 Fighter Group, Twin Engine, 1 Mar 1944

Redesignated 55 Fighter Group 19 Jul 1944

Inactivated, 20 Aug 1946

Redesignated 55 Reconnaissance Group (Very Long Range) (Mapping), 5 Feb 1947

Activated, 24 Feb 1947
Redesignated 55 Strategic Reconnaissance Group, 29 Jun 1948
Inactivated, 14 Oct 1949
Redesignated 55 Strategic Reconnaissance Group, Medium, 27 Oct 1950
Activated, 1 Nov 1950
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 55 Operations Group, 29 Aug 1991
Activated, 1 Sep 1991

STATIONS

Hamilton Field, CA, 15 Jan 1941
Portland, OR, 21 May 1941
Paine Field, WA, 10 Feb 1942
McChord Field, WA, 22 Jul 1942
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 28 Aug-4 Sep 1943
Nuthampstead, England, 14 Sep 1943
Wormingford, England, 16 Apr 1944
Kaufbeuren, Germany, 22 Jul 1945
Giebelstadt, Germany, 29 Apr-20 Aug 1946
MacDill Field (later, MacDill AFB) FL, 24 Feb 1947
Topeka (later, Forbes) AFB, KS, 30 Jun 1948-14 Oct 1949
Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico, 1 Nov 1950-16 Jun 1952
Offutt AFB, NE, 1 Sep 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

Northwest Air District (later, 2 Air Force), 15 Jan 1941
2 Interceptor Command, 2 Oct 1941
4 Air Force, 5 Jan 1942
4 Interceptor (later, IV Interceptor; IV Fighter) Command, 26 Jan 1942
Seattle Air Defense Wing, 12 Apr 1943
Eighth Air Force, 14 Sep 1943
VIII Fighter Command, 15 Sep 1943
66 Fighter Wing, 5 Oct 1943
XXIX Tactical Air Command, 20 Jul 1945
70 Fighter Wing, 6 Aug 1945-20 Aug 1946
311 Reconnaissance Wing (later, 311 Air Division, Reconnaissance), 24 Feb 1947
55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 19 Jul 1948-14 Oct 1949
55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Medium, 1 Nov 1950-16 Jun 1952
55 Wing, 1 Sep 1991

ATTACHMENTS

Seattle Air Defense Wing, 28 Oct 1942-11 Apr 1943

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-36, 1941-1942
P-38, 1941-1944
P-40, 1941-1942
P-43, 1941-1942
P-51, 1944-1946
P-80, 1946
F-2, 1947-1949
F-9, 1947-1948
RC-54, 1948
B/RB-17, 1947-1949
B/RB-29, 1948-1949
B/RB-29, 1950-1951
RB-50, 1950-1952
E-4, 1991
C-135, 1991-1994
EC-135, 1991
KC-135, 1991
NKC-135, 1991-1994
RC-135, 1991
TC-135, 1991
WC-135, 1992
T-38, 1992-1995
C-21, 1993-1997
OC-135, 1994

COMMANDERS

Cpt Kenneth S. Wade, 15 Jan 1941
Maj James W. McCauley, 1 May 1941
LTC Karl K. Bowen, 1 May 1942
Maj Jack S. Jenkins, 1 Aug 1942
Maj Ernest W. Keating, 13 Nov 1942
LTC Frank B. James, 15 May 1943
Col Jack S. Jenkins, 6 Feb 1944
Col George T. Crowell, 10 Apr 1944
LTC Elwyn C. Righetti, 22 Feb 1945
Col Ben Rimerman, 22 Apr 1945
LTC Jack W. Hayes Jr., 21 May 1945
LTC Horace A. Hanes, Jul 1946-unkn
Cpt Daniel W. Burrows, 24 Feb 1947
LTC Albert M. Welsh, 20 May 1947-unkn
LTC George Humbrecht, 26 Oct 1948-unkn
Col Herbert K. Baisley, unkn-1949
Col Richard T. King, 1 Nov 1950
BG Sydney D. Grubbs Jr., 20 Dec 1950

Col Alfred K. Kalberer, 18 Feb-16 Jun 1952
Col James W. Thomas Jr., 1 Sep 1991
Col David R. Wolfe, 21 Jan 1992
Col Ryan D. Paradis, 28 Jan 1994
Col Stephen C. German, 31 Jul 1995
Col Collin F. Flynn, 20 Sep 1996
Col Dennis Wier, 30 Jun 2004
Col Philip Smith, 28 Jul 2006
; Col Jeffery A. Herd, 5 Jun 2008
Col John Hanson, 21 May 2010
Col Russell W. Mammoser, 27 May 2012
Col Mohan S. Krishna, 27 May 2014
Col Joseph C. Santucci, 15 Jun 2016
Col Eric Paulson, 18 Jul 2018

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II
American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
ETO, 3-13 Sep 1944
Germany, 19 Feb 1945

Meritorious Unit Award
1 Jan 2002-31 May 2004
1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006
1 Jun 2006-31 May 2007
1 Jun 2007-31 May 2008

1 Jun 2008-31 May 2009
1 Jun 2009-31 May 2010
1 Jun 2014-31 May 2015
1 Jun 2016-31 May 2017

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1992-30 Jun 1994
1 Jul 1994-31 Jul 1995
1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999
1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001
1 Jun 2011-31 May 2012
1 Jun 2015-31 May 2016

EMBLEM

Group will use the wing emblem with the group designation in the scroll.



MOTTO

The Sun Never Sets on the Fightin' Fifty-Fifth

OPERATIONS

Trained in the United States for fighter combat missions, Jan 1941-Aug 1943. Began combat operations from England over continental Europe on 15 Oct 1943. Missions included escorting bombers over France and Germany. Patrolled the English Channel and bombed bridges in the Tours area of France during the invasion of Normandy in Jun 1944. Patrolled the Arnhem sector to support the airborne invasion of the Netherlands in Sep 1944. Strafed trucks, locomotives, and oil depots near Wesel in support of the Allied crossing of the Rhine River in Mar 1945. Received a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for eight missions to Germany between 3 and 13 Sep 1944. These missions involved destruction of enemy aircraft in the air during bomber-escort missions and low-

level strafing of enemy airdromes and aircraft on the ground despite intense antiaircraft fire. Received a second DUC for strafing sweeps against enemy railway and other targets in Germany on 19 Feb 1945. Flew last World War II combat mission on 21 Apr 1945.

First Mission: 15 Oct. 1943.

Last Mission: 21 Apr 1945

Aircraft missing: 181

Enemy aircraft destroyed 316.5 in the air and; 268.5 on the ground.

Served in the occupation of Germany, Jul 1945-20 Aug 1946. Between Feb 1947 and Oct 1949, provided precise mapping and photographic reconnaissance.

Between Nov 1950 and Jun 1952, the group was a "paper" organization, with the tactical squadrons attached directly to the 55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing.

Provided crews and aircraft for enforcement of no-fly zones over southern Iraq, 1992-, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1996.

Subordinate units operated in England, Japan, Greece, and southwest Asia. Largest operations group in Air Combat Command during the 1990s. Flew global reconnaissance and air-sampling missions during the 1990s, including Open Skies Treaty flights. The group continued to fly airborne command post missions it inherited from its parent wing in 1991, then in 1994 it began missions in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as it responded to natural disasters.

Since the end of the Cold War, the 55 Operations Group has maintained an unmatched operational tempo, supporting every US contingency worldwide. These missions have included but were not limited to reconnaissance, command and control, and airlift missions supporting Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, PROVIDE COMFORT, VIGILANT WARRIOR (Southwest Asia), PROVIDE PROMISE, DENY FLIGHT (Bosnia-Herzegovina), SUPPORT DEMOCRACY, UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (Haiti), and TIGER RESCUE (Yemen). Additionally, its squadrons have been called upon to support Distinguished Visitor airlift for the National Command Authorities, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and numerous exercises.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *Seattle Air Defense Wing*. @1942.