

## 137 SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

137 Fighter-Bomber Wing Established as the and activated, 26 Oct 1950  
Inactivated and allotted to the Oklahoma Air National Guard, 10 Jul 1952  
Activated, 10 Jul 1952  
Redesignated 137 Fighter-Interceptor Wing, 1 July 1955  
Redesignated 137 Air Defense Wing, 1 Aug 1957  
Redesignated 137 Air Transport Wing, Heavy, 1 Apr 1961  
Redesignated 137 Military Airlift Wing, 1 Jan 1966  
Redesignated 137 Tactical Airlift Wing, 10 Dec 1974  
Redesignated 137 Airlift Wing on 16 May 1992  
Redesignated 137 Air Refueling Wing, 1 Oct 2008  
Redesignated 137 Special Operations Wing, 2015

#### STATIONS

Will Rogers World Airport, OK, 26 Oct 1950  
Alexandria Air Force Base, LA, 27 Nov 1950 – 4 May 1952  
Operated from: Chaumont-Semoutiers AB, France, 13 May 1952 – 10 Jul 1952  
Will Rogers World Airport (later, Will Rogers ANGB), OK, 10 Jul 1952  
Will Rogers ANGB, Oklahoma City, OK, 1 Oct 2014

#### ASSIGNMENTS

Tactical Air Command, 26 Oct 1950  
Ninth Air Force, 1 Jan 1951  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jun 1952

Oklahoma Air National Guard, 10 Jul 1952

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

F-51, 1950  
RF-51, 1951  
RF-80, 1952  
F-51, 1953  
F-80, 1953  
F-86, 1958  
C-97, 1961  
C-124, 1968  
C-130, 1975  
KC-135, 2008  
MC-12, 2015

### **COMMANDERS**

BG Jerry W. Whitman, #1993  
Col James McCormack, #2007  
Col Gregory L. Ferguson, #2010  
Colonel Glen M. Baker, #2013

### **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**



This insignia was initially approved on 6 Jun 1952 for the 137 Fighter Bomber Wing. On 15 Aug

1961, BG Edward G. Johnson, OKANG, CO, wrote "The present crest was designed originally for a Group and does not conform to APR 900-3 and does not apply to the mission of this Wing". This laid the groundwork for the present Wing patch. Only the Latin inscription was retained.



Gules, on and over a bezant charged with a polar projection of the globe Azure, with land masses Light Blue and grid lines counterchanged, an aircraft fesswise Or casting a shadow Brown, all within a diminished bordure of the fourth. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "TONITRUS E CAELO" in Blue letters.

Very little documentation exists regarding the origin of this, our Wing patch. It supposedly evolved from a WW II design. The Latin inscription TONITRUS E CAELO (pronounced TAH-NEE-TRUS A KY-LOW) means "Thunder From The Sky" but there are several variations to this interpretation. It came into use as a patch early in the air transport era, having been approved on 15 Aug, 1961, and it's legend changed as the 185th squadron legend changed; i.e. Air Transport Wing to Military Airlift Wing to Tactical Airlift Wing and most currently to just Airlift Wing. The patch fell out of use during the early 70's although it still appeared on signs around the base; letterheads; and the masthead of our base paper, the Sooner Airlifter. Several years ago the patch again became authorized for wear on the flight suit for appropriate personnel. The version with the Latin inscription under the actual insignia was worn specifically by all crew members of Talking Bird. They also wore the orange flight suit. Today, this version of the patch is the rarest.



The legend on the scroll proclaiming the 137<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing dates this variation of the Wing insignia as circa Jan, 1966.



The 137<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing legend on the scroll below the insignia, dates this insignia as circa 1974.



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 globe represents the Air Force's Rapid Global Mobility reach. The stylized aircraft indicates the air mobility mission of the Wing.

#### **MOTTO**

TONITRUS E CAELO--Thunder From the Sky

#### **NICKNAME**

#### **OPERATIONS**

The problem started on 13 September, 1974 when we received C-130A # 55-0004. At the time we were assigned to MAC and had been since 1 April, 1961. S.O. G-648, dated 28 November, 1972 calling for 21st Air Force (MAC) to be our intermediate gaining command established this. The fun started when we received S.O. G-419, dated 13 August, 1974. This order reassigned us from MAC to TAG to be effective 20 September, 1974. So far, so good! But, on 1 September, 1974, 19 days BEFORE G-419 was to take effect it was canceled by S.O. G-460 keeping us in MAC and consequently the 137 was not actually under TAC at this time. Next, along comes S.O.

G-588 dated 27 November, 1974. It rescinds G-648 and tells us that we are no longer a Military Airlift Wing under 21st Air Force but a Tactical Airlift Wing under 21st Air Force. This is to be effective 10 December, 1974. This date coinciding with our transfer from a C-124 unit to a C-130 unit. We now begin calling ourselves a MACTICAL/TACTICAL Wing. It doesn't help much when some of us start feeling like nobody really knew how to handle a unit like this.

**2005 30 Aug** A C-130 and flight crew assigned to the 127<sup>th</sup> Wing, Michigan ANG, and an air evacuation crew assigned to the 137 Air Evacuation Squadron, Oklahoma ANG, evacuated 143 Veterans Administration hospital patients to Jackson, Mississippi.

31 AUG

Three C-130 assigned to the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, airlifted 145 Oklahoma Army National Guard personnel to NAS New Orleans. One C-130 assigned to the 127<sup>th</sup> Wing, Michigan ANG, flew to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to pick up an air evacuation crew assigned to the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG to evacuate approximately forty-three patients from NAS New Orleans and deliver them to Jackson, Mississippi.

2 SEP

The ANG CAT reported that a Contingency Response Group-Element (CRGE) and an Aerial Port Squadron (APS) from the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, and the 136<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Texas ANG, became operational at Gulfport CRTC. The 118 CRGE, Tennessee ANG, became operational at Stennis IAP in Mississippi to support hurricane relief efforts. Stennis IAP was an airlift off-load and receiving center for hurricane relief operations

4 September

Thirty-two Aerial Port Squadron personnel from the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, and the 165<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Georgia ANG, deployed in Title 32 status to Gulfport CRTC.

6 SEP

The 166<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, Delaware ANG; 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, and the 145<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, North Carolina ANG, deployed heavy and medium support vehicles to Gulfport CRTC to support hurricane relief efforts.

9-10 SEP

Two airfield managers assigned to the 131<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, Missouri ANG, and the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, deployed in Title 32 orders to Gulfport CRTC to augment the cadre of airfield managers deployed to this location. Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, authorized the 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, to airlift employees of the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company to NAS New Orleans to replace hurricane relief personnel who had been in New Orleans since 31 August.

15 SEP

The 137 Airlift Wing, Oklahoma ANG, deployed three Aeromedical Evacuation personnel in Title

32 status to Kelly AFB, Texas to support hurricane relief efforts.

7/27/2007 The Air Force Reserve Command's 507th Air Refueling Wing begins a new partnership in August when members of the Oklahoma Air National Guard team up for the drill weekend. With this action, the 507th ARW will become the first AFRC wing to have an Air National Guard wing associated with it. Approximately eight Oklahoma Air National Guard aircrew members are part of an initial cadre working side-by-side with their Reserve hosts to stand up associate operations. As a result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, the 137 Airlift Wing at Will Rogers World Airport was identified to lose their C-130 Hercules aircraft and convert to a KC-135 associate unit with the 507th ARW. Under this associate organization, the 507th ARW is the host wing with all 12 aircraft owned by AFRC. The Oklahoma Air National Guard will maintain separate administrative and operational control, but be associated with the 507th ARW, working together to fly and maintain all aircraft. For deployable tasking, both the 507th ARW and 137 AW will function with six primary aircraft assigned. "When you think about it, starting this associate relationship is pretty exciting," said Col. Jeffery R. Glass, the 507th ARW commander. "We're part of a DOD-wide Total Force Initiative reorganization. We're going to show that our air reserve component mix will be just as viable and beneficial to national defense." According to an April 2007 Site Activation Task Force report, the main body of aircrew and maintenance personnel should begin arriving before the end of the year.

Tinker to Get New Facility: The Air Force broke ground last week for a new \$8 million joint squadron operations facility that will serve as the nerve center for the Oklahoma Air National Guard's 137 Air Refueling Wing and Air Force Reserve Command's 507th ARW. The redesignated 137 ARW is the first reserve associate unit under USAF's Total Force plan. The Air Guard unit converted from airlift to air refueling under BRAC 2005 and began helping to fly and maintain the 12 KC-135s of the 507th ARW earlier this year. The AFRC wing was slated to receive funding for a new ops building, but officials of both wings pushed to combine efforts into one larger structure. "By combining funding sources and combining mutual joint use aspects such as the joint use auditorium, we are able to get a facility that will better satisfy the operational needs for both," said Joe Wade, 507th ARW facility program manager.

The Oklahoma Air National Guard's first MC-12W Liberty intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft recently arrived at Will Rogers ANGB, Okla., recommencing flight operations there for the first time since 2007. "The 137 Air Refueling Wing is very excited to return flying operations back to Will Rogers ... and join Air Force Special Operations Command," 137 ARW Commander Col. Devin Wooden. The Oklahoma unit lost its C-130s and moved to Tinker AFB, Okla., becoming a KC-135 associate unit with the Active Duty 507th ARW in 2007, with a detached headquarters at Will Rogers. The unit will again redesignate as the 137 Special Operations Wing, receiving a total of 13 MC-12s to conduct manned ISR and Aviation Foreign Internal Defense missions. With Air Combat Command's divestiture of its 33-strong MC-12 fleet, the AFSOC-aligned ANG unit will preserve the Air Force's accumulated expertise in

manned, tactical ISR, according to the unit's release. The first MC-12 arrived July 10, and officials marked the recommencement of flying at Will Rogers in a ceremony there Aug. 1. The 137 ARW flew its final KC-135 sortie June 30, officials stated. 2015

The first of 13 MC-12W aircraft was delivered to the 137 Air Refueling Wing at Will Rogers ANGB, Okla., on July 10, 2015. Air National Guard photo by MSgt. Andrew LaMoreaux. 2015

The association between the Air Force Reserve's 507th Air Refueling Wing and the Air National Guard's 137 ARW has ended after eight years of operations at Tinker AFB, Okla., according to a July 21 release. An Oklahoma ANG crew flew the final training flight on an AFRC KC-135 in late June, marking the end of the "formal association. Col. Brian Davis, commander of the 507th, said the ongoing relationship between the two organizations will continue. Borne of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, the 507th ARW was selected to be one of the first AFRC units to serve as a host wing for an associated ANG wing, with aircrew and maintainers from the 137 ARW moving from Will Rogers Air National Guard Base and flying and maintaining KC-135s from Tinker beginning in 2007. Over the past eight years, the wings have accumulated more than 13,500 combined flying hours, and served as a test model for integrating ANG and AFRC units. The 507th ARW will continue to fly and maintain KC-135s, while the 137 ARW will transition to Air Force Special Operations Command to take on the MC-12 Liberty, once again operating from Will Rogers. In January 2014, a similar arrangement between the AFRC and ANG at Niagara Falls ARS, N.Y., came to an end, as the Air Guard transitioned from flying C-130s to a remotely piloted aircraft mission. 2015

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USAF Unit Histories  
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Sources  
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