

## 455 AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING



### MISSION

The 455 Air Expeditionary Wing is comprised of approximately 2,000 Airmen at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The wing consists of five groups - the 455 Expeditionary Operations Group, 455 Expeditionary Mission Support Group, 455 Expeditionary Maintenance Group, 455 Expeditionary Medical Group, and the 451st Air Expeditionary Group. The wing's priorities are "Defend the Base, Support the Fight, and Win." The Wing is co-located with Combined Joint Task Force-10 (CJTF-10) at Bagram Airfield. CJTF-10 conducts operations that develop Afghan capability to secure its people, exercise independent governance and develop a sustainable economy while defeating terrorists and insurgents.

### LINEAGE

455 Bombardment Group (Heavy) constituted, 14 May 1943

Activated, 1 Jun 1943

Inactivated, 9 Sep 1945

Redesignated 455 Bombardment Group (Very Heavy), allotted to the reserve, activated, 25 Mar 1947

Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949

Redesignated 455 Fighter Day Group, 7 May 1956

Activated, 25 Jul 1956

Inactivated, 1 Jul 1957

455 Fighter Bomber Wing established, 23 Mar 1953

Redesignated 455 Strategic Missile Wing (ICBM-Minuteman) and activated, 28 Jun 1962

Organized, 1 Nov 1962

Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Jun 1968

455 Fighter Day Group and 455 Strategic Missile Wing (ICBM-Minuteman) consolidated (31 Jan 1984)

Redesignated 455 Air Expeditionary Group, and converted to provisional status, Dec 2001  
**Activated, 26 Apr 2002**  
**Redesignated 455 Air Expeditionary Wing, 26 Jul 2002**

### **STATIONS**

Alamogordo AAFld, NM, 1 Jun 1943  
Kearns, UT, 6 Sep 1943  
Langley Field, VA, 5 Oct-2 Dec 1943  
San Giovanni, Italy, 15 Jan 1944-9 Sep 1945  
Hensley Field, TX, 25 Mar 1947-27 Jun 1949  
Myrtle Beach AFB, SC, 25 Jul 1956-1 Jul 1957  
Minot AFB, ND, 1 Nov 1962-25 Jun 1968

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

II Bomber Command, 1 Jun 1943  
I Bomber Command, 4 Oct 1943  
Fifteenth Air Force, Jan 1944  
304 Bombardment Wing, 25 Jan 1944-9 Sep 1945  
Tenth Air Force, 25 Mar 1947  
309 Bombardment Wing (later, 309 Air Division), 17 Oct 1947-27 Jun 1949  
Ninth Air Force, 25 Jul 1956-1 Jul 1957  
Strategic Air Command, 28 Jun 1962  
810 Strategic Air Division, 1 Nov 1962-25 Jun 1968  
Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 4 Dec 2001

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24

### **COMMANDERS**

None (not manned), 1 Jun-Jul 1943  
Col Kenneth A. Cool, Jul 1943  
Col William L. Snowden, 26 Sep 1944  
Lt Col William R. Boutz, May 1945  
Maj Jerome Hoss, Jul 1945-unkn  
Unkn, 25 Mar 1947-27 Jun 1949  
Maj John C. Smith, 25 Jul 1956  
Maj Charles E. Cook Jr., 8 Nov 1956  
Maj Jack H. Bond, 1 Apr-1 Jul 1957  
None (not manned), 28 Jun-31 Oct 1962  
Col Gilbert F. Friederichs, 1 Nov 1962  
Col John P. Couch, 1 Aug 1964  
Col B. H. Davidson, 23 Jun 1967-25 Jun 1968  
Colonel Scott C. Long, Jun 2010 - Mar 2011  
Col Tony Johnson

Brig Gen Chris Miller  
Mark D. Kelly

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Combat, EAME Theater  
Air Offensive, Europe  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Rhineland  
Central Europe  
Po Valley

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
Steyr, Austria, 2 Apr 1944  
Austria, 26 Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device  
16 Apr 2002-15 Sep 2002  
16 Sep 2002-15 Sep 2003  
16 Sep 2003-30 Sep 2004

#### **Air Force Meritorious Unit Award**

1 Oct 2004-30 Sep 2005  
1 Oct 2004-30 Sep 2005  
1 Oct 2005-30 Sep 2006  
1 Oct 2006-30 Sep 2007  
1 Oct 2007-30 Sep 2008  
1 Oct 2008-30 Sep 2009  
1 Oct 2009-30 Sep 2010  
1 Oct 2010-30 Sep 2011  
1 Oct 2011-30 Sep 2012  
1 July 2012-30 June 2013  
1 July 2013-30 June 2014

## EMBLEM



455 Bombardment Group emblem



455 Strategic Missile Wing (ICBM-Minuteman) emblem: Argent on a chief nebuly light blue semee of mullets of the first a laurel branch arched fesswise or, overall between in base two lightning flashes palewise gules, in fess a sphere of the first and of the second with grid lines counterchanged surmounted by a missile palewise azure emitting a vapor trail to base of the third, all within a diminished bordure of the last. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The missile spanning the globe represents both range capability and alert vigilance day and night. The lightning bolts symbolize speed. The light blue background with white stars and olive branch in the upper portion of the shield identifies the unit as part of SAC's deterrent force. (Approved: Oct 1963)



455 Air Expeditionary Wing emblem: Argent, on a chief per fess nebuly Celeste bearing a semé of mullets of the first superimposed by a globe counter-changed palewise Azure and of the first gridlined of the like in base, two lightning flashes pilewise Gules, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "455 AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING" 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 globe represents range capability and alert vigilance both day and night. The stars allude to the unit as a worldwide deterrent force. The lightning flashes pertain to the speed by which the unit operates.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Trained with B-24s, Jul-Nov 1943. Moved to the Mediterranean Theater, with the ground echelon of the Group arriving in Italy in mid-Jan 1944. The flight echelon flew to Tunisia and trained for a month before joining the rest of the Group in Italy on 1 Feb 1944. Served in combat with Fifteenth Air Force from Feb 1944 to Apr 1945. Engaged primarily in bombardment of strategic targets such as factories, marshalling yards, oil refineries, storage areas, harbors, and airdromes in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, and the Balkans. Received a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for a mission on 2 Apr 1944 when the group contributed to Fifteenth Air Force's campaign against enemy industry by attacking a ball bearing plant at Steyr, Austria. Although meeting severe fighter opposition and losing several of its bombers on 26 Jun 1944, the group proceeded to attack an oil refinery at Moosbierbaum, Austria, receiving a second DUG for this performance. In addition to strategic missions in the Balkans, the group bombed troop concentrations, bridges, marshalling yards, and airdromes during the Fall of 1944 to hamper the enemy's withdrawal from the region. The group also supported ground forces at Anzio and Cassino in Mar 1944; knocked out gun positions in preparation for the invasion of southern France in Aug 1944, and assisted the final Allied drive through Italy in Apr 1945 by hitting such targets as bridges, gun positions, and troop concentrations. Inactivated in Italy on 9 Sep 1945. Served as a Reserve training unit, Mar 1947-Jun 1949. Activated as a fighter group in Jul 1956, but was only in the process of manning when

inactivated on 1 Jul 1957.

As a strategic missile wing, the 455 prepared for operational capability with intercontinental ballistic missiles, Nov 1962-Mar 1964. The first missile arrived on 6 Sep 1963 and was emplaced three days later. The 150th missile was emplaced in its silo on 26 Feb 1964 and by late Mar 1964, the wing became combat ready. Maintained combat readiness until replaced by the 91st Strategic Missile Wing in Jun 1968.

The 455 Air Expeditionary Wing, the wing Air Force reservists from the 442nd Fighter Wing were assigned to while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom, has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Award for its performance in Afghanistan. The award recognizes Air Force active-duty, Reserve and Air National Guard units for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding achievement or service in direct support of combat operations for at least 90 continuous days during the period of military operations against an armed enemy of the United States on or after Sept.11, 2001. According to criteria set in Air Force guidelines, “the unit must display such outstanding devotion and superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks as to set it apart and above other units with similar missions.” “I think it’s highly fitting and applicable based on what our folks did over there,” said Col. Steve Arthur, 442nd Fighter Wing commander. “Look at what they accomplished – integration with active duty after a last minute notification. They got up, deployed and then set records over there for munitions expenditures. They are highly-deserving and should feel proud.” The award was first created in 2001 and replaced the Outstanding Unit Award as the United States Air Force’s equivalent of the Army and Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation. The decoration is the unit equivalent to the Legion of Merit, one of the military’s highest honors. Squadrons, groups and wings may be recommended for the award. The distinction can’t be presented to any unit or component previously awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award or unit award from other service components for the same act, achievement or service. “Those who deployed from the 442<sup>nd</sup> and were part of the 455 Air Expeditionary Wing have earned and are entitled to wear this award,” said Senior Master Sgt. Cesar Ortiz, 442nd Military Personnel Flight superintendent. “The verifying official is the unit commander and, if in doubt, something as simple as presenting a travel voucher would be significant enough proof you are eligible to wear the award.” More than 300 Citizen Airmen from the 442nd, including maintainers, pilots, intelligence specialists, operations support Airmen and a public affairs officer were assigned to the 455 Air Expeditionary Wing and are eligible for the award.

Brig. Gen. Patrick Malackowski became the commander of the 455 Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, during a change-of-command ceremony, according to a base release. Malackowski took the command reins on July 8 from Brig. Gen. Joseph Guastella, who held the post since July 2012 and is moving on to become the Joint Staff's deputy director for requirements at the Pentagon. Maj. Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach, top Air Force officer in Afghanistan, officiated the ceremony, states the July 8 release. In his new role, Malackowski will be responsible for executing the close air support; air mobility; combat search and rescue; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and electronic attack operations from the major US air hub. In his previous job, Malackowski was Pacific Air Forces' director of programs and

analyses at JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Brig. Gen. Mark Kelly recently took command of the 455 Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, from Brig. Gen. Patrick Malackowski. Kelly, who previously served as the 345th Fighter Wing commander at Eielson AFB, Alaska 2014

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 455 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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USAF 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.

Unit history. Minot AFB, ND. Home of 810<sup>th</sup> Strategic Aerospace Division, 450<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (H), 455 Strategic Missile Wing, 862<sup>nd</sup> Combat Support Group, 862<sup>nd</sup> Medical Group, 5<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron. 1964.