

## 555<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE BAND



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

The 555th Air Force Band provides musical support for military ceremonies, official protocol functions, troop morale and retention events, recruiting programs, and Air Force and Department of Defense community relations programs that project the Air Force image and promote national heritage.

### STATIONS

Swanton, OH

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### COMMANDERS

CWO-2 L. E. Kackenmeister, 1948-1953

WOJG M. J. Lyons, 1953-1954

WOJG Duane R. Tuoey, 1954-1956

CWO2 John Ginther, 1957-1960

WOJG M. J. Lyons, 1960-1964

Maj Fred Dias, 1964-1981

Cpt Robert Kirchbaum, 1982

### HONORS

**Service Streamers**

## **Campaign Streamers**

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

## **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

ANG BAND OF THE GREAT LAKES

## **OPERATIONS**

Beginning in 1920, a military band was formed in Toledo, Ohio. The band was known as the 148th Infantry Band and was based at the old armory located at Speilbush and Orange.

During WW II the 148th was combined with several other small bands in Ohio and the 37th Ohio Division Band was formed. This band served in the Pacific during the war. In the latter part of 1945, the 37th Division Band was stationed at Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio.

Between 1945 and 1948 Toledo was without a military band. When it was learned that the Air Force was to be made a separate service, some of the musicians from the Toledo area who had helped organize and had served in the "old 148th" requested that the Air Force give Toledo permission to organize the Air Force band.

On June 30th, 1948, under the direction of CWO Lester Kachenmeister, the 555th Air Force Band received federal recognition and the band was on its way.

The band's home for the next ten years was the Wall Street Armory. In 1958 we were transferred to the old Toledo Municipal Airport, Walbridge, Ohio where the band stayed until its present quarters were built at Toledo Express Airport. During this time the band was under the direction of WO John L. Ginther, WO Duane Tovey. Captain Fred Dais is the conductor.

The 555th is made up of Toledo and area men from all walks of life. While many of our personnel are professional musicians, there are other such as salesmen, an electronics technician, a public relations director, and insurance agent, as well as several teachers whom we are proud to have as members.

In the past five years the 555th AF Band has toured the Pacific Northwest and twice toured Europe visiting Germany, France and Spain.

Toledeans have seen the 555th leading almost every downtown parade, in concert at Ottawa

Park amphitheater, and in joint concerts with area high school bands. The band also plays concerts at hospitals, childrens' homes, old folks homes, and in general, any place where the band can be of service.

Versatility is a key note in the band. They are able to form a marching band, a concert band, and 18 piece dance band, and several small "combos" and perform at many military and social functions throughout the state.

The Triple Nickel is an important part of the Ohio Air National Guard. We support the 180th Fighter Wing at Toledo Express Airport in Swanton, Ohio. The band meets one weekend per month and two weeks during the summer to train, rehearse, and perform. The mission of the band is to establish and maintain favorable relations within the community that it serves, augment local recruiting efforts, and provide appropriate music for civilian and military functions in its assigned area.

The unit performs in several formations, including a marching band, concert band, stage band, and rock band. Small brass, percussion, and woodwind groups are also regularly featured. The combined bands play for over 300,000 people annually throughout the Great Lakes area. We have also traveled and performed tours in the following states and countries: Germany, Hungary, Spain, Panama, England, Alaska, New York, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, South Dakota, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, New Jersey, Idaho, Virginia and South Carolina.

The 555th performed annual training June 23 through July 2, 2000, to provide recruiting, military and community relations support to the Ohio National Guard and the "Triple Nickel" area of operation. In addition, the band performed at the "largest air show in the world," the Royal International Air Tattoo, July 18-24, 2000, at Cottesmore Royal Air Base, United Kingdom. Other significant achievements during this reporting period include performances by the concert band (23), jazz band (21), protocol combo (9), rock band (17), woodwind ensemble (14), flute ensemble (14), ceremonial band/funerals (3) and individual musicians (28). Notable performances included playing at the change-of-command ceremony for Col. Tom Schart, 180th Fighter Wing; the Family Day Pavilion Party attended by state Sen. Linda Furney; the immigration and naturalization ceremony attended by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur; and the televised live performance of the rock band on Channel 24 in Toledo, which publicized July 4th activities sponsored by the 180th Fighter Wing and the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program. Overall, the band accomplished 132 performances, playing for a combined audience of more than 427,500.

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Air Force Order of Battle  
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Sources  
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.