

## 50 SPACE WING



### MISSION

The wing operates and supports satellite programs including the Defense Support Program, the Global Positioning System, the Defense Satellite Communications System, and Milstar, as well as managing the worldwide Air Force Satellite Control Network.

The wing operates satellite operation centers at Schriever AFB and remote tracking stations and other command and control facilities around the world. These facilities monitor satellites during launch, put the satellites in their proper orbits following the launch, operate the satellites while they are in orbit and keep them functioning properly.

### LINEAGE

50 Fighter Wing established, 16 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Jun 1949  
Redesignated 50 Fighter-Interceptor Wing, 1 Mar 1950  
Ordered to active service, 1 Jun 1951  
Inactivated, 2 Jun 1951  
Redesignated 50 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 15 Nov 1952  
Activated, 1 Jan 1953  
Redesignated 50 Tactical Fighter Wing, 8 Jul 1958  
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1991  
Redesignated 50 Space Wing, 1 Jan 1992  
Activated, 30 Jan 1992

### STATIONS

Otis AFB, MA, 1 Jun 1949-2 Jun 1951  
Clovis AFB, NM, 1 Jan-23 Jul 1953

Hahn AB, Germany, 10 Aug 1953  
Toul-Rosieres AB, France, 17 Jul 1956  
Hahn AB, Germany, 10 Dec 1959-30 Sep 1991  
Falcon (later, Schriever) AFB, CO, 30 Jan 1992

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

First Air Force, 1 Jun 1949  
Eastern Air Defense Force, 1 Sep 1950-2 Jun 1951  
Ninth Air Force, 1 Jan 1953  
Twelfth Air Force, 9 Aug 1953  
United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 Jan 1958  
Seventeenth Air Force, 15 Nov 1959-30 Sep 1991  
Air Force Space Command, 30 Jan 1992  
Fourteenth Air Force, 20 Sep 1993

### **ATTACHMENTS**

33 Fighter [later, 33 Fighter-Interceptor] Wing, 1 Jun 1949-2 Jun 1951

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

T-6, 1949-1951  
T-33, 1949-1951  
F-51, 1949-1950  
F-84, 1949-1950  
F-86, 1950-1951  
F-51, 1953  
F-86, 1953-1958  
Matador, 1955-1956  
ET-33, 1955-1956  
F-100, 1957-1966  
F-104, 1962  
F-4, 1966-1982  
F-102, 1968-1970  
F-106, 1975  
F-16, 1981-1991  
Satellites, 1992

### **COMMANDERS**

Brig Gen Bruce Johnson, 1 Jun 1949-1951  
Col Wallace S. Ford, 1 Jan 1953  
Col Melvin F. McNickle, 22 Jul 1954  
Col Fred J. Ascani, 24 Jun 1955  
Brig Gen Henry C. Newcomer, 26 Jul 1957  
Col Frank L. Wood Jr., Aug 1959  
Col Jack S. Jenkins, 1 Sep 1959

Col William P. McBride, 16 Jul 1962  
Col David T. McKnight, 12 Feb 1963  
Col Louis J. Lamm, 9 Jun 1964  
Col George W. McLaughlin, 20 Jul 1964  
Col Richard C. Catledge, by May 1966  
Col Robert L. Liles, 20 May 1966  
Col Forrest L. Rauscher, 28 Jun 1968  
Col John W. Smith, 14 Jun 1969  
Col William B. Craig, 22 Apr 1970  
Col Billy F. Rogers, 17 Nov 1970  
Col William C. Norris, 1 Oct 1971  
Brig Gen Michael E. DeArmond, 2 Jan 1973  
Col Paul M. Ingram, 26 Aug 1974  
Brig Gen James P. Albritton, 14 Mar 1975  
Col Emery S. Wetsel Jr., 19 May 1978  
Col David M. Goodrich, 24 Jun 1980  
Col Wilfred L. Goodson, 28 Jan 1982  
Col John M. Davey, 20 Oct 1982  
Col Clifton C. Clark Jr., 8 Jan 1985  
Col Ben Nelson Jr., 31 Jul 1986  
Col Roger C. Taylor, 2 Mar 1988  
Col George W. Norwood, 27 Feb 1990-30 Sep 1991  
Brig Gen Roger G. DeKok, 30 Jan 1992  
Col Gregory L. Gilles, 17 Jun 1993  
Col Simon P. Worden, 4 Nov 1944  
Brig Gen Glen W. Moorhead III, 22 Mar 1996  
Col Elwood C. Tircuit, 25 Apr 1997  
Col Richard E. Webber, 9 Jun 1999  
Col Larry D. James, 20 Apr 2001  
Col Michael D. Selva, 7 Feb 2003 (interim)  
Col Suzanne M. Vautrinot, 9 Jun 2003  
Col John E. Hyten, 4 Apr 2005  
Col James C. Hutto Jr., 15 May 2006 (interim)  
Col John E. Hyten, 14 Oct 2006  
Col Teresa A. Djuric, 22 May 2007  
Col Cary Chun, 12 Jun 2008

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Nov 1970-15 Sep 1971

1 Jan 1972- 30 Jun 1973

1 Jul 1973-30 Jun 1974

1 Jul 1975-30 Jun 1976

1 Jul 1982- 30 Jun 1984

1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1987

1 Jul 1990-5 Aug 1991

1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000

1 Oct 2001-1 Oct 2002

2 Oct 2002-2 Oct 2003

### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by the 50 Operations Group prior to 1 Jun 1949

### **Service Streamers**

World War II

American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

European Theater, 13-20 Mar 1945

Germany, 25 Apr 1945

Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army

6 Jun-30 Sep 1944

### **EMBLEM**



In 1953, the wing adopted a new emblem featuring an opinicus standing, facing left, grasping lightning bolts and an olive branch. This emblem sought to modernize the opinicus to a

fearsome beast. The olive branch and lightning rod, common in emblems of the era, reflected the Air Force's mission of achieving peace through strength.

In 1956, the wing began flying nuclear-capable aircraft, and the emblem changed again. The opinicus became a griffin breathing fire and facing forward as if attacking, with an atomic cloud behind it. Behind the right talons was an olive branch, and behind the left talons, a lightning bolt.

In March 1992, changes in heraldry rules required the removal of nuclear symbols from Air Force emblems. The 50 SW returned to the emblem developed and used by the 50 FG in World War II. This change served to preserve the unit's heraldry and to demonstrate the link between the 50 SW and the 50 FG.

Azure, an opinicus passant Argent, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the disc, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "MASTER OF SPACE" in Blue letters. The griffin, is a mythological creature with the body, hind legs and tail of the lion and the claws, head and wings of an eagle. The griffin combines the fortitude, vigilance, virtue, and traits of the eagle, with the strength and valor of the lion. The cloud and thunderbolt represent the power of the 50 Tactical Fighter Wing, while the olive branch indicates the wisdom and love of peace that tempers the awesome power. The main colors are Air Force Blue and Gold indicating the wing's support to the Air Force mission. The motto, "Master of the Sky" denotes the 50's air superior.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Served as Reserve corollary of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter (later, Fighter-Interceptor) Wing, 1949-1951.

In 1953, converted from F-51 to F-86F before moving to Europe. Provided tactical operations in support of USAFE, NATO, and US Army forces beginning Aug 1953.

Added air defense to its other tactical missions in Nov 1958.

Stored and maintained ammunition and weapons for selected NATO organizations beginning Oct 1967.

Supported and controlled CONUS dual-based fighter squadrons at Hahn, 1969-1976, and at other collocated operating bases in West Germany and Denmark, 1976-1985.

In Aug 1977, switched to a strike-attack role, with air defense as a secondary mission. The 50 was the first USAFE wing to transition to the F-16, beginning 30 Dec 1981; the last F-4 left the wing on 21 Jun 1982.

Transitioned from the F-16A/B to the F-16C/D, Dec 1985-Mar 1987. Supported preparations for

Ground Launched Cruise Missile activities at Wueschein, Germany, 1982- 1985.

Supported the 38th Tactical Missile Wing from 1 Apr 1985 until Aug 1990. Provided personnel, munitions, and equipment to support the liberation of Kuwait (Southwest Asia). Also deployed the 10th TFS to Southwest Asia from Dec 1990-May 1991.

The 50 TFW lost its F-16s in May-Aug 1991 in preparation for inactivation.

Replaced the 2d Space Wing at Falcon AFB, CO, on 30 Jan 1992.

Operated satellites for the Defense Support Program, Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, Navstar Global Positioning System, Defense Satellite Communications System, and NATO III Fleet Satellite Communications System.

Added Ultra-High Frequency Follow-on Satellite System in 1993. Supported space operations of allies, NASA, and other U.S. agencies. Managed as many as six major satellite systems at once.

The 50 Space Wing was activated January 30, 1992, at Falcon Air Force Base, Colo. The wing was originally activated on July 8, 1985, as the 2nd Space Wing. The mission of the 50 Space Wing is to command and control operational Department of Defense satellites and manage the worldwide Air Force Satellite Control Network (AFSCN).

The wing operates satellite operation centers at Falcon AFB, and remote tracking stations and other command and control facilities around the world. These facilities monitor satellites during launch, put the satellites in their proper orbits following launch, operate the satellites while they are in orbit, and fix satellite anomalies when they occur.

The wing controls several satellite programs, including the Defense Support Program (DSP), the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP), the Navstar Global Positioning System (GPS), the Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS), NATO III, and the Navy's Fleet Satellite (FLTSAT) Communications system and the Ultrahigh Frequency Follow-on (UHF F/O) system. It will also support communication satellites, such as Milstar when they become fully operational.

The wing is composed of four groups: 50 Operations, 50 Logistics and 50 Support Groups at Falcon AFB; and the 750 Space Group at Onizuka AFB, Calif.

The 50 Operations Group commands and controls assigned operational Department of Defense satellite systems, trains space operations crews, and provides operational support and evaluation functions for management of satellite control centers and assigned ground stations. The group is composed of eight squadrons.

The 50 Logistics Group manages and executes 50 Space Wing responsibilities for logistics, maintenance activities and communications-computer resources in support of the Air Force Space Command's space operations mission. The group is composed of three squadrons.

The 50 Support Group operates and maintains Falcon AFB, with responsibility for maintaining base security, providing civil engineering and general activities support. The group is also responsible for base support of the wing's 16 sites worldwide.

The wing's space operations squadrons are primarily concerned with control, telemetry, tracking and commanding of assigned satellites. Crew members conduct 24-hour operations to continually monitor the status of and control satellite systems.

The 1st Space Operations Squadron at Falcon AFB provides support during launch, early orbit, mission, and anomaly resolution phases throughout the lifetime of GPS, DSP and DMSP satellites. The squadron crews control newly launched satellites during their initial orbital checkout phase. When all satellite subsystems are functioning properly and the satellite is stabilized, the squadron turns over day-to-day command and control of the system to various AFSPACCOM users.

The 2nd Space Operations Squadron at Falcon AFB is responsible for day-to-day command and control of the Navstar GPS satellite constellation. Navstar GPS is a space-based radio navigation network providing 24-hour, all-weather, precise positioning and timing information to meet the needs of United States and allied military services worldwide, as well as the civilian community. When fully operational in 1993, the GPS constellation will consist of 24 satellites circling the globe every 12 hours. Detachment 1, 2nd Space Operations Squadron, is located at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., where it monitors software and supports prelaunch compatibility testing of GPS satellites.

The 3rd Space Operations Squadron at Falcon AFB is responsible for day-to-day command and control of 20 military communication satellites including DSCS II and III, NATO III, and FLTSAT. Responsibilities include commanding, tracking and conducting telemetry analysis. The operators also provide launch and early orbit support, trend analysis, and vehicle anomaly resolution. Future communication satellites such as UHF Follow-On will be controlled by the squadron when the system becomes operational. The squadron will also support Milstar for launch, early orbit, and anomaly resolution when it becomes operational.

The 4th Space Operations Squadron at Falcon AFB will be responsible for the day-to-day operations, to include payload management, of the Milstar communications satellite system when it becomes operational. Milstar is a joint service system that will provide secure, jam resistant, 24-hour, worldwide communications to meet essential wartime operational requirements for high-priority military users. Launch of the first Milstar satellite is expected to take place in 1993.

The wing's 6th Space Operations Squadron is located at Offutt AFB, Neb., and Det 1, 6th Space Operations Squadron is at Fairchild AFB, Wa. They are responsible for day-to-day command and control of the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP). The 6th Space Operations Squadron does primary command and control functions for the DMSP satellites including



mission planning, anomaly resolution, satellite engineering, and launch and early orbit (LEO). The mission of Det 1, 6th Space Operations Squadron is limited to antenna operations with emergency command and control capabilities. DMSP satellites are designed to meet unique military requirements for worldwide weather information. These satellites can detect developing patterns of weather and track existing weather systems over remote areas.

Training of satellite crews is the responsibility of the 50 Crew Training Squadron. The squadron provides all initial qualification training for satellite operations crews assigned to the space operations squadrons. It is responsible for training instructors command-wide on basic instructor techniques, scenario development and training program development.

The 750 Space Group at Onizuka AFB, Calif., is responsible for the daily operation of the majority of the Air Force Satellite Control Network. The network consists of nine subordinate tracking stations located around the world: 23rd Space Operations Squadron, New Boston AFS, N.H.; Det 1, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.; Det 3, Thule AB, Greenland; Det 4, Mahe Island, Seychelles; Det 5, Andersen AFB, Guam; Det 6, Kaena Point, Oahu, Hawaii; Colorado Tracking Station, Falcon AFB, Colo.; Det 8, Diego Garcia, Chagos Archipelago; and Oakhanger, England, operated by the United Kingdom. The tracking stations command, track, record, and process on-orbit satellite data in support of DOD, NASA, and NATO programs. The wing assumed operational control of the AFSCN in October 1987.

Two Resource Control Complexes belonging to the 750 Space Group and designated the 21st Space Operations Squadron at Onizuka AFB, and the 22nd Space Operations Squadron at Falcon AFB, give the network dual node capability, insuring continual support for on-orbit satellites. Our mission in the 50 Space Wing is twofold: to fly our satellites, and to enable those who use our satellite command and control networks to fly theirs.

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

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