

53 ELECTRONIC WARFARE GROUP



MISSION

The 53 Electronic Warfare Group is responsible for systems engineering, testing, evaluation, tactics development, employment, capability, and technology assessment. Group personnel develop, test, and maintain electronic warfare system hardware and software; and have the wartime responsibility for emergency reprogramming and dissemination of EW system mission data software for CAF aircraft. The group also manages the HAF-Directed COMBAT SHIELD Electronic Warfare Assessment Program for CAF aircraft EW systems. COMBAT SHIELD provides operational units a system-specific capability assessment for their radar warning receivers, electronic attack pods, and integrated EW systems.

The 53d Electronic Warfare Group is made up of three squadrons and two detachments: the 16th Electronic Warfare Squadron, the 16th Electronic Warfare Squadron, Detachment 1, the 36th Electronic Warfare Squadron, the 68th Electronic Warfare Squadron, and Detachment 1, 53 EWG.

Detachment 1, 53d EWG, is the 53d EWG's execution agent for ground-based foreign materiel exploitations, western test range electronic warfare support, COMBAT SHIELD EW effectiveness assessments, supporting combined air operations center Nellis activities, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities at the Nevada Test and Training Range. Detachment personnel coordinate test plans, work schedule and support issues with the range, assist with shipping and bed down of test equipment, and participate in execution of testing and subsequent data analysis. Detachment 1 coordinates and executes COMBAT SHIELD ground-check activities of electronic warfare suites for RED FLAG participating units and western CONUS bases.

LINEAGE

68 Observation Group established, 21 Aug 1941

Activated, 1 Sep 1941

Redesignated 68 Reconnaissance Group, 31 May 1943
Redesignated 68 Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 13 Nov 1943
Disestablished, 15 Jun 1944
Reestablished and redesignated 68 Reconnaissance Group, 10 Mar 1947
Activated in the Reserve, 9 Apr 1947
Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949
Redesignated 68 Strategic Reconnaissance Group, Medium, 4 Oct 1951
Activated, 10 Oct 1951
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 68 Air Refueling Group, Heavy, 17 Mar 1982
Activated, 30 Sep 1982

68 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, Medium, established, 4 Oct 1951
Activated, 10 Oct 1951
Redesignated 68 Bombardment Wing, Medium, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 68 Bombardment Wing, Heavy, 15 Apr 1963
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1982

68 Air Refueling Group, Heavy and 68 Bombardment Wing, Heavy consolidated, 1 Oct 1982.
Consolidated unit designated 68 Air Refueling Group

Redesignated 68 Air Refueling Wing, Heavy, 1 Oct 1986
Inactivated, 22 Apr 1991
Redesignated 68 Electronic Combat Group, 9 Apr 1993
Activated, 15 Apr 1993
Inactivated, 20 Nov 1998

53 Electronic Warfare Group established, 1 Nov 1998
Activated, 20 Nov 1998

68 Electronic Combat Group and 53 Electronic Warfare Group consolidated, 25 Jul 2000.
Consolidated unit designated 53 Electronic Warfare Group

STATIONS

68 Group
Brownwood, TX, 1 Sep 1941
New Orleans AB, LA, 17 Dec 1941
Daniel Field, GA, 8 Feb 1942
Smith Reynolds Aprt, NC, 9 Jul 1942
Morris Field, NC, c. 17 Aug-18 Oct 1942
Casablanca, French Morocco, Nov 1942
Oujda, French Morocco, c. Nov 1942
Berrechid Afld, French Morocco, 24 Mar 1943
Berteaux, Algeria, 5 Sep 1943

Massicault, Tunisia, 26 Oct 1943
Manduria, Italy, Nov 1943
Blida, Algeria, Jun-15 Jun 1944
Hamilton Field, CA, 9 Apr 1947-27 Jun 1949
Lake Charles AFB, LA, 10 Oct 1951-16 Jun 1952

68 Wing
Lake Charles (later, Chennault) AFB, LA, 10 Oct 1951
Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, 15 Apr 1963-30 Sep 1982

Consolidated Organization
Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, from consolidation in 1982-22 Apr 1991
Eglin AFB, FL, 15 Apr 1993-20 Nov 1998
Eglin AFB, FL, 20 Nov 1998

ASSIGNMENTS

3 Air Support Command, 1 Sep 1941
Third Air Force, 17 Mar 1942
III Ground Air Support Command, 19 May 1942 (attached to 3rd Demonstration Air Task Force
[Provisional], 12 Jun 1942-unkn
VIII Ground Air Support Command, 18-22 Jun 1942)
VIII Ground Air Support Command, 23 Jun 1942
III Ground Air Support Command, 4 Jun 1942
Third Air Force, 21 Aug 1942
III Ground Air Support Command, 24 Aug 1942
XII Air Support Command, 18 Oct 1942 (attached to 5 Bombardment Wing, 31 Oct 1942-)
Northwest African Tactical Air Force, 18 Jun 1943 (remained attached to 5 Bombardment Wing)
XII Training Command, c. Mar 1943 (remained attached to 5 Bombardment Wing)
XII Bomber Command, 18 Oct 1943 (remained attached to 5 Bombardment Wing)
Fifteenth Air Force, 1 Nov 1943-15 Jun 1944 (remained attached to 5 Bombardment Wing to 4 Dec
1943; attached to 47 Bombardment Wing, 4 Dec 1943-24 May 1944)
325 Reconnaissance Wing (later, 325 Air Division), 10 Mar 1947-27 Jun 1949
68 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, 10 Oct 1951-16 Jun 1952

37 Air Division, 10 Oct 1951 (attached to 21 Air Division, 10 Oct 1951-15 May 1952)
Second Air Force, 28 May 1952
806 Air Division, 16 Jun 1952 (attached to 7 Air Division, 14 Jun-7 Aug 1954 and 27 Sep 1957-8 Jan
1958)
825 Air (later, 825 Strategic Aerospace) Division, 15 Jun 1960
822 Air Division, 15 Apr 1963
57 Air Division, 1 Jul 1964
822 Air Division, 1 Jul 1965
57 Air Division, 2 Sep 1966
823 Air Division, 2 Jul 1969

42 Air Division, 30 Jun 1971-30 Sep 1982

Consolidated Organization

42 Air Division, from consolidation in 1982

Eighth Air Force, 16 Jun 1988-22 Apr 1991

USAF Air Warfare Center (later, 53 Wing), 15 Apr 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS

68 Group, 1941-1952

O-38, 1941-1942

O-46, 1941-1942

O-47, 1941-1942

O-49, 1941-1942

YO-50, 1941-1942

O-52, 1941-1942

O-57, 1941-1942

O-58, 1941-1942

O-59, 1941-1942

A-20, 1942-1943

DB-7, 1942

L-4, 1942

O-43, 1942

P-39, 1942-1943

P-40, 1942-1943

P-43, 1942

A-36, 1943

B-17, 1943-1944

P-38, 1943

P-38/F-4, 1943

P-51, 1943

P-51/F-6, 1943

Spitfire, 1943

A-6, 1947-1949

A-7, 1947-1949

A-11, 1947-1949

68 Wing, 1951-1982

B-29, 1952-1953

B-47, 1953-1963

KC-97, 1953-1957

B-52, 1963-1972, 1973-1982

KC-135, 1963-1972; 1973-1985

KC-10, 1982-1991

KC-135, 1982-1991
None, 1993-1998
None, 1998

COMMANDERS

Unkn, Sep-Dec 1941
LTC Guy L. McNeil, 15 Dec 1941
Maj John R. Fordyce, 30 Jun 1942
LTC Eugene C. Woltz, 13 Mar 1943
Col Charles D. Jones, 8 Aug 1943-15 Jan 1944
Col Harper L. McGrady, unkn
Col Smith, unkn
Col Monro MacCloskey, Mar-May 1944
Col Lowell G. Sidling, 26 Oct 1951-16 Jun 1952

Cpt William S. Glass Jr, 10 Oct 1951
Col Lowell G. Sidwell, 26 Oct 1951
Brig Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro, 20 Aug 1952
Col Joel A. Carroll Jr., 17 Jan 1953
Col Robert R. Gideon Jr., 22 Jan 1953
Col Herbert O. Wangeman, Jun 1953
Col Robert R. Gideon Jr., Sep 1953
Col Joel A. Carroll Jr, 15 Oct 1954
Col Robert I. Barrowclough, 25 Oct 1954
Col Andrew J. Bratton Jr., 11 Jun 1956
Col Robert I. Barrowclough, 7 Jul 1956
Col Andrew J. Bratton Jr., 17 Jun 1957
Col Robert I. Barrowclough, 18 Jul 1957
Col Frank P. Bender, 27 Jul 1957
Col James T. Gribble Jr., 1 Sep 1959
Col John W. Livingston, 3 Oct 1960
Col Edward D. Gaitley Jr., 15 Feb 1963
Col Osce V. Jones, 15 Apr 1963
Col Walter A. Hardzog Jr., 16 Jun 1963
Col Charles J. Beck, 1 Jul 1963
Col Raymond E. Buckwalter, 28 Sep 1965
Col Robert E. Brofft, 1 Sep 1966
Col Eugene L. Hudson, 28 Apr 1967
Col Harold E. Ottaway, 6 Jul 1968
Col Donald L. Stallsmith, 29 May 1969
Col Robert W. Daniels, 30 Apr 1970
Col LeRoy P. Hansen, 15 Oct 1970
Col Donald F. Ryan, 14 May 1971
Col Melvin G. Bowling, 7 Jun 1972

Col Jerome E. Wechter, 15 Feb 1973 (temporary), 10 May 1973 (permanent)
Col George P. Tynan, 6 Jun 1974
Col James E. Myers Sr., 28 Jul 1975
Col Caryl W. Calhoun, 22 Aug 1975
Col Henry L. Conn, 14 Jul 1977
Col Robert L. Kirtley, 26 Jun 1979
Col William J. Grove Jr., 19 Jan 1981
Col George S. Robertson III, 6 Oct 1981-30 Sep 1982

Col George S. Robertson III, 6 Oct 1982
Col William O. West III, 30 Aug 1983
Col Charles P. Rushforth III, 3 Jul 1985
Col Edward F. Grillo Jr., 24 Aug 1987
Col Norman F. Rathje, 14 Dec 1988-22 Apr 1991
Col Jock P. Patterson, 18 May 1993
Col Jeffrey L. Upp, 17 Feb 1995
Col Charles T. Allan, 3 Sep 1997
Col William N. Holloway, 4 Aug 2000
Col John S. Clark, 9 Aug 2002
Col Larry L. Rexford, 23 Jun 2004
Col Gregory F. Dragoo, 21 Jul 2006
Lt Col Melvin Peterson, 26 Apr 2008
Col Kevin McElroy, 2 Jul 2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Algeria-French Morocco with Arrowhead
Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Grenada, 1983

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jun 1985-30 Jun 1987
2 Apr 1989-1 Apr 1991
1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006

Air Force Organizational Excellence Award
[15 Apr 1993]-31 Dec 1993

EMBLEM

Azure, an eye of the first surmounting a tuft of six feathers, imposed on a tuft of eight feathers, between and at the base of two wings conjoined in the form of a "V" or (Approved, 17 Sep 1942. This insigne was replaced, 3 Oct 1952)



Per chevron reversed azure and gules, a gauntlet couped close of the second outlined argent in honor point grasping an "S" shaped olive branch or detailed gold brown and a refueling boom palewise also gold extending to base, all between six mullets of the third in chief and eight mullets of the like chevronwise reversed on the second? all within a diminished bordure or. Blue and 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 mailed fist from the Strategic Air Command emblem signifies the unit's major command* The olive branch echoes SAC's motto of "Peace is Our Profession. The flying boom represents the refueling mission. The pattern of the stars, six and eight, refer to the unit designation.

MOTTO

VICTORIA PER OBSERVATIAM—Victory through Observation

OPERATIONS

The group's squadrons used a wide variety of observation aircraft in training, and after 7 Dec 1941, to fly antisubmarine patrols over the Gulf of Mexico and patrols along the Mexican border. In Feb 1942 commenced training for overseas duty. Continued submarine patrols with assigned aircraft as

training intensified. While awaiting shipment overseas, the group participated with Army units in exercises emphasizing air-ground support and took part in Carolina maneuvers in North Carolina. Moved to the Mediterranean Theater, Oct-Nov 1942. Squadrons detached from the group for separate duties; operated from bases in North Africa until Nov 1943; carried out diverse activities as: patrolling the Mediterranean; strafing trucks, tanks, gun positions and supply dumps in support of ground troops; training fighter pilots and replacement crews. Moved to Italy in Nov 1943; conducted visual and photographic reconnaissance. Returned to North Africa and disbanded on 15 Jun 1944.

Trained in the Reserve as a Reconnaissance Group in California, 1947-1949.

The 68 Group and 68 Wing were both technically active between 10 Oct 1951 and 16 Jun 1952, the group was a paper unit, with token personnel assigned on additional duty to keep it active and with its flying squadrons controlled by the wing.

In Oct 1951, began operational training as a reconnaissance wing. Received B-29 aircraft and trained as a bombardment wing in May 1952.

Added a refueling mission in Nov 1953.

Conducted strategic bombardment training, May 1954-Jun 1963, and air refueling, May 1954-Sep 1957, to meet SAC's global commitments.

Wing aircraft, most aircrews and maintenance personnel, and other support personnel were loaned to other SAC units for combat operations in Southeast Asia, 27 May 1972-15 Jul 1973.

Participated in combat operations in Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury), Oct 1983, Libya (Operation Eldorado Canyon), Apr 1986, Panama (Operation Just Cause), Dec 1989.

Deployed to Spain to provide airlift and air refueling during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Aug 1990-Mar 1991. Inactivated on 22 Apr 1991.

Activated on 15 Apr 1993 as an Electronic Combat Group. Provided operational and technical electronic combat expertise for US combat air forces, 1993-1998. Performed electronic warfare (EW) technology assessments; tested, developed, managed, and maintained EW systems hardware and software to meet Combat Air Force (CAF) mission requirements, 1998.

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.