

## AIR FORCE GLOBAL STRIKE COMMAND



### MISSION

Develop and provide combat-ready forces for nuclear deterrence and global strike operations to support the President of the United States and combatant commanders.

AFGSC is responsible for organizing, training and equipping the Air Force's three intercontinental ballistic missile wings, two B-52 Stratofortress wings and the only B-2 Spirit wing. The three weapons systems make up two-thirds of the nation's strategic nuclear triad by providing the land-based and airborne nuclear deterrent forces.

### LINEAGE

Continental Air Forces established, 13 Dec 1944

Activated, 15 Dec 1944

Redesignated Strategic Air Command, 21 Mar 1946

Inactivated, 1 Jun 1992

Redesignated as Air Force Global Strike Command and activated, 7 Aug 2009

### STATIONS

Washington, DC, 15 Dec 1944

Bolling Field, DC, by 1946

Andrews Field (later, AFB), MD, 21 Oct 1946

Offutt AFB, NE, 9 Nov 1948-1 Jun 1992

Barksdale AFB, LA, 7 Aug 2009

### ASSIGNMENTS

Army Air Forces, 15 Dec 1944

United States Air Force, 26 Sep 1947-1 Jun 1992

United States Air Force, 7 Aug 2009

## **COMMANDERS**

Brig Gen E. H. Beene, 15 Dec 1944  
Maj Gen St Clair Streett, 1 Mar 1945  
Gen Henry H. Arnold, 1 Jul 1945  
Gen George C. Kenney, 21 Mar 1946  
Gen Curtis E. LeMay, 19 Oct 1948  
Gen Thomas S. Power, 1 Jul 1957  
Gen John D. Ryan, 1 Dec 1964  
Gen Joseph J. Nazzaro, 1 Feb 1967  
Gen Bruce K. Holloway, 29 Jul 1968  
Gen John C. Meyer, 1 May 1972  
Gen Russell E. Dougherty, 1 Aug 1974  
Gen Richard H. Ellis, 1 Aug 1977  
Gen Bennie L. Davis, 1 Aug 1981  
Gen Larry D. Welch, 1 Aug 1985  
Gen John T. Chain, 1 Jul 1986  
Gen George L. Butler, 1 Feb 1991-1 Jun 1992  
Lt Gen Frank G. Klotz, 7 Aug 2007  
Lt Gen James M. Kowalski  
Lt Gen Stephen Wilson, Oct 2013  
Gen Robin Rand, 2015

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards  
1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1986  
1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1988  
1 Oct 1988-30 Sep 1990  
1 Oct 1990-31 May 1992

### **EMBLEM**

Approved, 20 May 2009



Strategic Air Command: On a sky-blue shield over two clouds, one in the upper left and one in the lower right extending to the edges of the shield, white shaded blue-gray, a cubit arm in armor issuing from the lower left and extending toward the upper part of the shield, the hand grasping an olive branch green, and three lightning flashes red. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The blue sky is representative of the Air Force operations. The arm and armor is a symbol of strength, power and loyalty, and represents the science and art of employing far reaching advantages in securing the objectives of war. The olive branch, a symbol of peace, and the lightning flashes, symbolic of speed and power, are qualities underlying the mission of the Strategic Air Command. (Approved, 4 Jan 1952)

The insignia evolved out of a contest conducted in 1951. With a \$100 U.S. Defense Bond as the prize, the contest drew entries from 60 military and civilian personnel scattered throughout the command. The judges, Generals LeMay, Power, and Kissner, selected the design submitted by Staff Sergeant Robert. T. Barnes, who was assigned to the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Wing, Fairchild AFB, WA.

Air Force Global Strike Command: The globe reflects the command's global capabilities with the golden wings representing the dominance in the air and reflecting lineage to the Army Air Corps. The blue field alludes to the sky, the primary domain of the Air Force. The star represents clarity of purpose to maintain readiness and deter adversaries. The red disc symbolizes past and present Airmen who have made individual sacrifices to achieve mission goals. The lightning flashes, symbolic of speed and power, represent the AFGSC warfighting mission should deterrence fail, and is a reminder of the command's lineage to Strategic Air Command.

#### **MOTTO**

PEACE IS OUR PROFFESION

In late 1957, as part of a reenlistment program, a fifty-foot Christmas tree was erected in front of the Headquarters SAC administration building. Unit commanders could light one of the bulbs by reenlisting a given number of first-term airmen. A status board was maintained nearby to

reflect the names of those commanders who met the quota. A painter was called upon to affix a sign to the board reflecting the theme of the reenlistment drive - Maintaining Peace is Our Profession - but he found insufficient room to accommodate all these words. LTC Edward Martin and Chief Warrant Officer Ben Kohot, project officers for the Tree of Peace program, decided to omit the word "maintaining." While visiting Headquarters SAC, Col Charles T. Van Vliet, Eighth Air Force Director of Information, saw the sign, liked it, and took the idea back to Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts. Subsequently, "Peace is Our Profession" appeared on a large sign at Westover's main entrance. In early 1958, other Eighth Air Force bases followed suit, journalists began publicizing it as being the SAC slogan, and soon it was readopted by Headquarters SAC.

## **OPERATIONS**

The Continental Air Forces, created in Dec 1944, coordinated the activities of the four numbered air forces (First, Second, Third, and Fourth) in the United States. Strategic bombardment operations during World War II had shown the need for a major command devoted exclusively to strategic, long-range air combat operations, and that became the command's assigned mission in 1946.

On 21 Mar 1946 Headquarters Continental Air Forces was redesignated as Headquarters Strategic Air Command. Resources of the Continental Air Forces were divided among three new commands— Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and Air Defense Command. SAC received most of these resources, including the headquarters at Bolling Field, Washington, D.C and approximately 100,000 personnel, 22 major installations and over 30 minor bases, and a conglomerate of bomber, fighter, reconnaissance, and support aircraft. With postwar demobilization still in process, these resources would be drastically reduced by the end of the year.

The Strategic Air Command was prepared to conduct long range offensive operations in any part of the world either independently or in cooperation with land and Naval forces; to conduct maximum range reconnaissance over land or sea either independently or in cooperation with land and Naval forces; to provide combat units capable of intense and sustained combat operations employing the latest and most advanced weapons; to train units and personnel for the maintenance of the Strategic Forces in all parts of the world; to perform such special missions as the Commanding General, Army Air Forces may direct. Headquarters U.S. Army Air Forces gave SAC an additional mission—sea-search and antisubmarine warfare.

In Jan 1957, Headquarters SAC completed its move into the newly-built Control Center. This nine million dollar facility actually consisted of two interconnected structures: an administration building, consisting of three stories above ground and a basement, and an underground three-story command post. Access from one facility to the other was provided by a tunnel. The underground facility, which was designed to be safe from anything but a direct hit by a high yield nuclear weapon, housed the Control Room and related communications equipment and computers designed to maintain close contact with SAC forces throughout the world. Giant panels of maps and boards were used to depict the exact disposition and

operational status of the entire force. Prior to this move, which commenced in Dec 1956, Headquarters SAC had operated out of several buildings that had housed the Glenn L. Martin bomber plant in World War II.

On 27 Aug 2009, Air Force Global Strike Command was activated and was tasked to oversee all of the U.S. Air Force's long-range nuclear-capable bomber and intercontinental ballistic missile forces in a ceremony at Barksdale AFB. On 1 Dec 2009, the command assumed the Air Force's Minuteman III ICBM mission. With the assumption of 20th Air Force, the command gained three missile wings, including 20th Air Force's responsibility for all of the 450 ICBMs. The 576th Flight Test Squadron at Vandenberg AFB, CA., as well as the 625th Strategic Operations Squadron at Offutt AFB, NE., also officially re-aligned under AFGSC. These units were previously part of Air Force Space Command. On 1 Feb 2010 The command assumed the Air Force's strategic long-range nuclear-capable B-2 and B-52 missions. With the assumption of the 8th Air Force mission, the command gained three bomb wings. These units were previously part of Air Combat Command.

Air Force Global Strike Command is on a journey to change its culture, said Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson, who oversees the major command. What started out as the Force Improvement Program an ad hoc initiative launched to improve issues in the missileer force following a cheating scandal at Malmstrom AFB, Mont.—has morphed into what Wilson is calling the "Continuous Force Improvement Philosophy," which he said is intended to empower airmen every day. "Our job, whether it be at 20th Air Force or headquarters, is to remove the barriers to our airmen's success" and then "let them do their job," Wilson told Air Force Magazine in a Jan. 9 interview. "That may be policy, procedure, [or] people that are encumbering them from mission accomplishment," he said. He used the example of a squadron lieutenant who suggests a way to improve training and then later sees his suggestion come to fruition. Suddenly, said Wilson, that lieutenant has a personal buy-in. "That's why I believe this program will live on," said Wilson. "This isn't my program, or [20th AF Commander Maj. Gen. Jack] Weinstein's program. This is a program owned by airmen." 2015

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

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