

THIRD AIR FORCE (AIR FORCES EUROPE)



MISSION

LINEAGE

Southeast Air District established, 19 Oct 1940
Activated, 18 Dec 1940
Redesignated 3 Air Force, 9 Apr 1941
Redesignated Third Air Force, 18 Sep 1942
Inactivated, 1 Nov 1946
Organized, 1 May 1951
Inactivated, 1 Nov 2005
Redesignated Third Air Force (Air Forces Europe), 29 Nov 2006
Activated, 1 Dec 2006

STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 18 Dec 1940
Tampa, FL, Jan 1941
Greenville Army Air Base, SC, 21 Mar 1946
Victoria Park Estate (later, U.S. Air Base, South Ruislip; South Ruislip Air Station),
England, 1 May 1951
RAF Mildenhall, England, Apr 1972
RAF Mildenhall, England, 15 Apr 1972-1 Nov 2005
Ramstein AB, Germany, 1 Dec 2006

ASSIGNMENTS

Southern Defense Command, U.S. Army, 18 Dec 1940
Army Air Forces, Sep 1943
Continental Air Forces, 16 Apr 1945
Tactical Air Command, 21 Mar 1946

United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 May 1951-1 Nov 2005
United States Air Forces in Europe, 1 Dec 2006

COMMANDERS

MG Barton K. Yount, 18 Dec 1940
MG Lewis H. Brereton, 29 Jul 1941
MG Walter H. Frank, 6 Oct 1941
BG Carlyle H. Wash, 25 Jun-26 Nov 1942
MG St Clair Streett, 12 Dec 1942
MG Westside T. Larson, n Sep 1943
BG Edmund C. Lynch, 14 May 1945
BG Thomas W. Blackburn, 26 May 1945
LTG Lewis H. Brereton, 1 Jul 1945
MG Elwood R. Quesada, 1-21 Mar 1946
MG Paul L. Williams, 28 Mar-1 Nov 1946
MG Leon W. Johnson, 3 May 1951
MG Francis H. Griswold, 6 May 1952-20 Apr 1954
MG Roscoe C. Wilson, 30 Apr 1954



MG Ernest Moore (USAF photo)

MG Ernest Moore, 16 Jul 1957
MG John H. Ives, 17 Mar 1961
MG R. W. Puryear, 15 Aug 1962
MG John S. Hardy, 23 Jun 1964
MG Clyde Box, 27 Oct 1966
MG Lawrence S. Lightner, 16 Jul 1968
MG John H. Bell, 30 Jul 1969
MG William F. Pitts, 14 Jul 1971
MG James E. Hill, 12 Jun 1972
MG Evan W. Rosencrans, 5 Nov 1973
MG William C. Norris, 1 Aug 1977
MG Robert W. Bazley, 25 Jun 1980

MG Walter H. Baxter, 13 Jul 1981
MG Carl H. Cathey, Jr., 30 Jul 1982
MG William P. Acker, 10 Jun 1983
MG Thomas G. McInerney, 23 Jul 1985
MG William K. James, 30 Sep 1986
MG Marcus A. Anderson, 27 Jun 1988
MG Charles D. Link, 15 Jul 1991
MG James G. Andrus, 28 Jul 1993
MG Tad J. Oelstrom, 25 Jul 1995
MG William S. Hinton Jr., 18 Jul 1997
MG Joseph H. Werhle Jr., 2 Jul 1999
MG Kenneth W. Hess, 2 Jun 2000
MG Michael W. Wooley, 7 Jun 2002
Col John E. Watkins, 28 Jun 2004
MG Michael C. Gould, 15 Jul 2004-1 Nov 2005
LTG Robert D. Bishop, Jr., 1 Dec 2006
LTG Philip M. Breedlove, #2008
LTG Frank Gorenc, #2010
MG Carlton Everhart II
LTG Craig Franklin
LTG Darryl L. Roberson, 2014
LTG Timothy Ray, 2 Jul 2015

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

20 Aug 1990-8 Mar 1991

1 Jul 1995-30 Jun 1997

1 Apr 1998-31 Mar 2000

1 Apr 2000-31 Mar 2002

1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

EMBLEM



On and over a blue disc within a yellow border an Arabic numeral "3" in white, in bend sinister, shaded in red perspective with a white star charged with a red disc in the lower loop. The winged star is symbolic of the Army Air Forces and the Arabic numeral "3" indicates the unit's numerical designation. (Approved, 1 Sep 1943; revised, 8 Dec 1953 and, 13 May 1996)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

One of the original four numbered air forces formed in the United States in 1940, primarily trained units, crews, and individuals for bombardment, fighter, and reconnaissance operations. Also had air defense responsibilities and some units engaged in antisubmarine efforts from Dec 1941-Oct 1942. Following WWII, assigned to Tactical Air Command to serve as a troop carrier organization until Nov 1946.

Beginning in May 1951, responsible for U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) bases and units in the United Kingdom; conducted training and operations in support of NATO. From the early 1990s until 2005, Third Air Force served as USAFE's primary humanitarian command element and was involved in several operations in sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkans; also given responsibility in 1996 for all USAFE units north of the Alps and expanded duties in Eastern Europe and Africa.

Beginning in Dec 2006, assumed role as warfighting headquarters component for air forces in Europe.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 23 Aug 2010

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Unit yearbook. *81 Tactical Fighter Wing. 1959*. Reg. Cholerton. Newton-Le-Willows, England. 1959.