

THIRD AIR FORCE (AIR FORCES EUROPE)



MISSION

Third Air Force exercises delegated authorities over assigned forces that include personnel management, General Courts Martial Convening Authority, and advising subordinate commands on requirements, programs and budget. Third Air Force also works with its subordinate commands to ensure implementation and compliance with relevant policies and directives. Additionally, Third Air Force facilitates coordination between its subordinate commands and USAFE-AFAPRICA, USEUCOM, USAFRICOM, DOD agencies, and other field activities.

As U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa's only numbered air force, the NAF's 28-member, command staff provides support for all of Third Air Force, which consists of 10 wings with more than 32,000 Airmen across two continents -- an area-of-responsibility that stretches from the Arctic to the Cape of Good Hope.

Airmen and their families are our greatest resource, and we take deliberate actions to develop them as a group and as individuals. We are focused on confronting global challenges in support of the National Defense Strategy to defend our country and our allies. Through our dedicated efforts, we will deliver peace to our nation and its allies by fostering stability and deterring aggression throughout Europe and Africa.

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

Maj Gen Barton K. Yount, 18 Dec 1940
Maj Gen Lewis H. Brereton, 29 Jul 1941
Maj Gen Walter H. Frank, 6 Oct 1941
Brig Gencarlyle H. Wash, 25 Jun-26 Nov 1942
Maj Gen St Clair Streett, 12 Dec 1942
Maj Gen Westside T. Larson, N Sep 1943
Brig Genedmund C. Lynch, 14 May 1945
Brig Genthomas W. Blackburn, 26 May 1945
Lt Gen Lewis H. Brereton, 1 Jul 1945
Maj Gen Elwood R. Quesada, 1-21 Mar 1946
Maj Gen Paul L. Williams, 28 Mar-1 Nov 1946
Maj Gen Leon W. Johnson, 3 May 1951
Maj Gen Francis H. Griswold, 6 May 1952-20 Apr 1954
Maj Gen Roscoe C. Wilson, 30 Apr 1954
Maj Gen Ernest Moore, 16 Jul 1957
Maj Gen John H. Ives, 17 Mar 1961
Maj Gen R. W. Puryear, 15 Aug 1962
Maj Gen John S. Hardy, 23 Jun 1964
Maj Gen Clyde Box, 27 Oct 1966
Maj Gen Lawrence S. Lightner, 16 Jul 1968
Maj Gen John H. Bell, 30 Jul 1969
Maj Gen William F. Pitts, 14 Jul 1971

Maj Gen James E. Hill, 12 Jun 1972
Maj Gen Evan W. Rosencrans, 5 Nov 1973
Maj Gen William C. Norris, 1 Aug 1977
Maj Gen Robert W. Bazley, 25 Jun 1980
Maj Gen Walter H. Baxter, 13 Jul 1981
Maj Gen Carl H. Cathey, Jr., 30 Jul 1982
Maj Gen William P. Acker, 10 Jun 1983
Maj Gen Thomas G. McInerney, 23 Jul 1985
Maj Gen William K. James, 30 Sep 1986
Maj Gen Marcus A. Anderson, 27 Jun 1988
Maj Gen Charles D. Link, 15 Jul 1991
Maj Gen James G. Andrus, 28 Jul 1993
Maj Gen Tad J. Oelstrom, 25 Jul 1995
Maj Gen William S. Hinton Jr., 18 Jul 1997
Maj Gen Joseph H. Werhle Jr., 2 Jul 1999
Maj Gen Kenneth W. Hess, 2 Jun 2000
Maj Gen Michael W. Wooley, 7 Jun 2002
Col John E. Watkins, 28 Jun 2004
Maj Gen Michael C. Gould, 15 Jul 2004-1 Nov 2005
Lt Gen Robert D. Bishop, Jr., 1 Dec 2006
Lt Gen Philip M. Breedlove, 22 Jul 2008
Lt Gen Frank Gorenc, 24 Aug 2009
Lt Gen Craig A. Franklin, 30 Mar 2012
Maj Gen Carlton D. Everhart II, 1 Feb 2014
Lt Gen Darryl Roberson, 11 Jun 2014
Lt Gen Timothy Ray, 2 Jul 2015
Lt Gen Richard M. Clark, 21 Oct 2016
Maj Gen John M. Wood, 7 Sep 2018
Maj Gen Randall Reed, 24 Jun 2020
Col John F. Gonzales, Acting, 18 May 2022
Maj Gen Derek C. France, 22 Jun 2022

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.



Maj Gen Ernest Moore (USAF photo)

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 13 Aug 2011

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.