

26th AIR DIVISION



LINEAGE

Established as 26th Air Defense Division, 21 Oct 1948
Activated, 16 Nov 1948
Redesignated 26th Air Division (Defense), 20 Jun 1949
Inactivated, 1 Feb 1952
Organized, 1 Feb 1952
Redesignated 26th Air Division (SAGE), 8 Aug 1958
Redesignated 26th Air Division, 1 Apr 1966
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1969
Activated, 19 Nov 1969
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1990

STATIONS

Mitchel AFB, NY, 16 Nov 1948
Mitchel AFB Sub Base #3, Roslyn, NY, 18 Apr 1949-1 Feb 1952
Mitchel AFB Sub Base #3, Roslyn (later, Roslyn AFS), NY, 1 Feb 1952
Syracuse AFS, NY, 15 Aug 1958
Hancock Field, NY, 14 Feb 1959
Stewart AFB, NY, 15 Jun 1964
Adair AFS, OR, 1 Apr 1966-30 Sep 1969
Luke AFB, AZ, 19 Nov 1969
March AFB, CA, 31 Aug 1983-1 Jul 1987

DEPLOYED STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

First Air Force, 16 Nov 1948
Air Defense Command, 1 Apr 1949
First Air Force, 16 Nov 1949
Eastern Air Defense Force, 1 Sep 1950-1 Feb 1952
Eastern Air Defense Force, 1 Feb 1952
Air Defense Command, 1 Aug 1959
Fourth Air Force, 1 Apr 1966-30 Sep 1969
Tenth Air Force, 19 Nov 1969

Aerospace Defense Command, 1 Dec 1969
Tactical Air Command, 1 Oct 1979
First Air Force, 6 Dec 1985-30 Sep 1990

ATTACHMENTS

Eastern Air Defense Force, 17 Nov 1949-31 Aug 1950

COMMANDERS

Unkn (manned at paper unit strength), 16 Nov 1948-31 Mar 1949
Col Ernest H. Beverly, c. 1 Apr 1949
BG Russell J. Minty, by Nov 1949
Col Hanlon H. Van Auken, 1953
BG James W. McCauley, 1 Apr 1953
BG Thayer S. Olds, 26 Oct 1955
BG Arthur C. Agan Jr., 1 Aug 1957
MG Sam W. Agee, 8 Aug 1958
BG Ernest H. Beverly, c. May 1960
BG William E. Elder, c. Jun 1960
BG Ernest H. Beverly, 20 Jun 1960
BG Henry Viccellio, 11 Jul 1960
MG Arthur C. Agan Jr., 1 Jul 1963
BG Thomas B. Whitehouse, 8 Jun 1964
MG Von R. Shores, 20 Jul 1964
MG Gordon H. Austin, 29 Jul 1965
BG Frank W. Gillespie, 1 Apr 1966
Col Wayne E. Rhynard, 29 Jul 1966;
Col Harry L. Downing, by Sep 1969-c. 30 Sep 1969. BG Sanford K. Moats, 19 Nov 1969
BG Richard G. Cross Jr., Aug 1970
BG James E. Paschall, 1 Dec 1971
BG Ranald T. Adams Jr., 21 May 1973
BG Dan A. Brooksher, 30 Aug 1974
MG Thomas E. Clifford, 19 Apr 1976
BG James S. Creedon, 7 Sep 1978
Col Allan E. Aaronson, 22 Jan 1979
Col Frank T. Faha, 15 Mar 1979
BG James S. Creedon, 2 Feb 1980
BG Thomas W. Sawyer, 1 Aug 1980
Col Henry D. Canterbury, 27 Jan 1982
Col Richard A. Pierson, 7 Jun 1982
BG Christian F. Dreyer Jr., 22 May 1985
BG John M. Davey, 15 Aug 1986-1 Jul 1987

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

None

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

4 Feb 1972-12 Mar 1973

15 Jul 1975-14 Jul 1977

16 Jul 1978-15 Jul 1980

EMBLEM

Or, three stylized jet aircraft one in chief fesswise, one bend sinisterwise in bend, and one palewise, nose to base in sinister fess azure, arched from sinister base to dexter fess a segment of a globe of the like charged with a stylized building within an atomic symbol argent. (Approved 17 Nov 1960)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Beginning in Nov 1948, the division performed air defense over an area that covered much of the industrial northeast, including New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. It employed off shore naval picket ships, fixed "Texas Tower" radar sites, airborne early warning units, and a civilian ground observer corps program. The latter phased down when the SAGE program was implemented. Improved radar and communications equipment and fighter interceptors, and better techniques and methods, eventually led to the 26th Air Division becoming the first operational SAGE air defense system (1 Jan 1959) within Air Defense Command. The 26th's area of control expanded until by 1963 its boundaries extended from the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico and well toward the center of the United States. In 1961 the division assumed air defense training responsibility for Air National Guard (ANG) units within the area. During the Cuban Crisis of 1962, the division deployed fighter aircraft and part of its airborne early warning and control force to Florida. In Apr 1966, the division, replaced by the First Air Force, moved without personnel or equipment to Adair AFS, Oregon, where it assumed responsibility for the defense of Oregon, part of California and Nevada, gradually phasing down until it replaced the 27th Air Division at Luke AFB, Arizona in Nov 1969. In Oct 1979, it transferred to Tactical Air Command and continued to supervise its assigned components until 1 Jul 1987.

1958 26 AD

INCLUDES LIST OF SUBORDINATE UNITS. STATES THAT 26 AIR DIVISION (SAGE (SEMIAUTOMATIC GROUND ENVIRONMENT)) (26 AD) WOULD BECOME FIRST

OPERATIONAL SAGE DIVISION.

26 AD WAS COMPRISED OF: NEW YORK AIR DEFENSE SECTOR (NYADS); BOSTON AIR DEFENSE SECTOR (BOADS); SYRACUE AIR DEFENSE SECTOR (SADS); WASHINGTON AIR DEFENSE SECTOR (WADS); AND BANGOR AIR DEFENSE SECTOR (BAADS).

STATES THAT THESE FIVE AIR DEFENSE SECTORS WERE FORMERLY ASSIGNED TO 26 AD OR 32 AIR DIVISION (DEFENSE) (32 AD). 26 AD NEW AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY INCLUDES PORTIONS OF FORMER AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF: 26 AD, 32 AD, 30 AIR DIVISION (30 AD), 85 AIR DIVISION (85 AD), 35 AIR DIVISION (35 AD) AND 58 AIR DIVISON (58 AD).

THE joint air defense division is the lowest command echelon at which the air battle can be run. If an attack comes to the eastern United States, from the control centers of JEADF's seven divisions much of the work of beating it off will be done. At each control center, the division commander, an Air Force officer, will sit. Before him will be a large transparent plexiglass board on which will be displayed the air activity over his division area. He will be flanked by Army and Navy representatives and by key members of his staff. Here he will issue Warning Yellow, Red, White. Here he will put into effect the SCATER plan to ground unessential air traffic and CONELRAD to eliminate all radio signals which might help the enemy to navigate. Here he will receive information from the radars of his aircraft control and warning squadrons and the thousands of human eyes of the civilians manning the Ground Observer Corps. Here he will commit his weapons, his aircraft, missiles and guns, to battle.

The joint air defense division is a specialized and unusual military organization. It derives its peculiarity from that of its parent organization, the air division (defense) of the Air Force. The latter was conceived in the late 1940s, when the dangers of communist expansion and the possibility of a third world war made it imperative that the Nation construct an air defense system. Like its superior, the air defense force, the air division (defense), was established as an area command. It was given authority over many diverse tactical units, but it was also made responsible for guarding from attack a specific geographic area. Therefore, it had boundaries, it could be drawn on a map. This unity of the division as a military organization and its geographic area has engendered a deep sense of identity between the two. If each air division has a special character today, it is the character of the land and the people of that piece of America it protects.

One such division is the 26th Joint Air Defense Division. The 26th is commanded by Brig. Gen. Thayer S. Olds and has its headquarters at Roslyn Air Force Station, Long Island, New York, a few miles outside New York City. The mission of the 26th is to defend a sector of the United States which includes all of Massachusetts, Conn., Rhode Island and New Jersey, and parts of New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Here are located the Nation's greatest population centers and industrial complexes, New York City, Philadelphia, and Boston. To carry out this mission, NIKE missiles and anti-aircraft guns of the Army, radar picket ships and aircraft of the Navy, and all the tactical units of the 26th Air Division (Defense) of the Air Force have been placed under the commander's operational control.

The 26th Air Division (Defense), which is also commanded from Roslyn by General Olds, is

the parent organization of the 26th Joint Air Defense Division. The old 26th was one of the Air Force's first two air divisions given the distinguishing appellation "defense." Activated in October 1948 and assigned to First Air Force, its units were allocated to the newly formed Eastern Air Defense Force in late 1949. Its mission to protect America's most vital area was to be carried out with resources hardly adequate: two fighter wings, one the famed 4th, unforgettable for its Korean glory, the other the 52nd, proud of its great World War II record, one aircraft control and warning group of worn-out World War II radars and not a single ground observer volunteer. But in the following years the 26th grew in numbers of units until today, it is assigned four fighter groups, seven aircraft control and warning squadrons, fifteen fighter-interceptor squadrons, and one ground observer squadron. Among them is the 52nd Fighter Group (AD) and the 2nd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron at Suffolk County Air Force Base, Long Island, New York. These many units are linked together by a vast communications net and are directed by a highly efficient control center at Roslyn. They work with highly efficient radar gear and fly fast, rocket-firing jet aircraft. And new, better equipment — the Convair F-102A supersonic all-weather jet interceptor, for example — is on the way. A good part of the credit for this growth in size and effectiveness must be given to Brig. Gen. James W. McCauley, now Vice Commander of JEADF and EADF, who led the 26th from May 1953 to September 1955.

Especially influential in shaping the history and traditions of the 26th Air Division (Defense) have been the tremendous strategic importance of the sector it protects and the location of this sector on the eastern seaboard of the United States. The first has caused the 26th to be the most heavily armed of all air divisions: it now possesses more fighter-interceptor aircraft than the entire Central Air Defense Force and as many as Western Air Defense Force.

The seaboard location of the 26th has brought to the division commanders the problem of the "seaward extension of the air defense combat zone," or in more simple terms, the problem of extending radar coverage and aircraft capability far enough offshore to permit detection and interception of attackers prior to their bomb release point. In solving this problem, the 26th has been eminently successful. Four Navy Radar Picket ships, under the operational control of the division commander, patrol constantly several hundred miles out in the Atlantic; one Texas Tower radar island is anchored off Cape Cod and others are being constructed elsewhere; and radar picket planes of the 551st Airborne Early Warning and Control Squadron of ADC's 8th Air Division (AEW&C) are patrolling the skies far over the ocean.

Navy forces, then, were an integral part of the 26th's defense system for some years prior to the activities of the 26th Joint Air Defense Division in September 1954. So, too, were the anti-aircraft facilities of the Army. But the relationship of the three services before the creation of the joint entity was based on mutual agreement alone; there was no single command which held operational authority over them all. With the coming of the new organization this was changed. Now a single officer, the joint air defense division commander, an Air Force general, has been given the task of forging a single alert and powerful air defense system.

Despite the complexity and efficiency of its weapons and electronic equipment, the strength of the 26th Joint Air Defense Division lies in its men. Veterans of World War II and Korea are the nucleus of its tactical units. They watch the radar scopes, pilot the planes, and prepare the Nike for launching. Some of them are on alert every minute of the day, prepared to give the order to aircraft, Nike and guns, if the enemy comes. To these military men are joined the thousands of civilian volunteers, men and women, who man the observation posts and filter centers of the GOC. All of them, Army, Navy, Air Force and civilian, are part of the 26th's defense team.

26 Air (Defense) Division

1953

Mission: Conduct air defense in an area extending along the Atlantic coast of the United States from Massachusetts/Rhode Island and Massachusetts/Connecticut boundaries to the Virginia/North Carolina boundary; support operations of Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command and Military Air Transport Service; conduct collateral mission of antisubmarine warfare; and trains units and individuals assigned.

Note: In event of war 26 Air Division would: exercise operational control of Eastern Army Antiaircraft Command; exercise operational control over Navy and Marine Corps forces or facilities made available for air defense purposes (Joint Agreement for Air Defense of Eastern and Central United States, 10 Jun 53); provide security for aircraft transporting atomic weapons; participate in protection of coastal areas of United States from sea borne attack as directed; coordinate with regional, state and municipal civil defense agencies in air defense matters; exercise operational control over other air force major command forces and facilities made available for air defense purpose (Air Defense Command (ADC) operations plan 4-53, 1 Jan 53); coordinate with CAA (Civil Aeronautics Administration) regional administrators concerned on basis of mutually approved agreements for identification and control of air traffic for air defense purposes; implement plans for control of electromagnetic radiations; participate in disaster relief and domestic emergencies according to ADC plans; prepare units for overseas deployment as directed; provide trained individual replacements as directed; coordinate necessary activities with AACS and MFS as directed; provide internal security and local ground defense of installations participate in psychological warfare operations as directed; insure that all personnel are trained in defense procedures to minimize covert or overt attacks in which biological or toxic chemical weapons are used; and integrate designated Air National Guard units into Air Defense plans.

Radar types: AN/CPS-6B, AN/TPS-1, AN/CPS-4

Subordinate Units:

646 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Highlands, New Jersey

647 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Manassas, Virginia

648 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Benton, Pennsylvania

770 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Palermo, New Jersey

771 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Cape Charles, Virginia

772 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Claysburg, Virginia

773 Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron, Montauk, New York

Exercises:

Bluejay

Autumn Leaves

Pigskin

Pigeon Toe

1955/26AD

States that 26 Air Division area of responsibility included 26 critical target areas most of which were situated in a crescent extending from Bridgeport Ct, Through New York Ny, Trenton Nj, Philadelphia Pa, Baltimore Md, Washington Dc, To Norfolk Va.

Sixty-four army nike antiaircraft missile batteries were assigned to 26 air division augmentation forces.

26th Air Division: activated on 16 November 1948 at Mitchel AFB, NY, and assigned to the First Air Force; moved to Roslyn AFS, NY, on 18 April 1949; redesignated 26th Air Division (Defense) on 20 June 1949; reassigned to Eastern Air Defense Force on 1 September 1950; redesignated 26th Air Division (SAGE) on 8 August 1958 and moved to Syracuse AFS, NY; Syracuse AFS redesignated Hancock Field, NY, ca. July 1959; transferred to ADC on 1 August 1959; moved to Stewart AFB, NY, on 15 June 1964; redesignated 26th Air Division on 20 January 1966; transferred to Fourth Air Force on 1 April 1966, and moved to Adair AFS, OR; inactivated 30 September 1969. Activated at Luke AFB, AZ, on 19 November 1969; reassigned to TAC on 1 October 1979.

Commanded by Brig Gen. Thayer S. Olds, the 26th Air Division was activated at Mitchel Field during the spring of 1949 for later transfer to Roslyn. Its headquarters was located at Roslyn Air Force Station, Long Island, New York, a few miles outside New York City. The mission of the 26th Air Defense Division was to defend the sector of the United States which included all of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and parts of New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. To carry out this mission, NIKE missiles and anti-aircraft guns of the Army, radar picket ships and aircraft of the Navy, and all the tactical units of the 26th Air Division (Defense) of the Air Force were placed under the commander's operational control.

The mission of the 26th Air Division (Defense) was to conduct the air defense of a sector of the Eastern Air Defense Force region defined as follows: that area of the Continental United States bounded within a line beginning at sea adjacent to the Atlantic Seaboard, at the limit of radar surveillance and controlled fighter interceptor capability, and exceeding an azimuth of 302 degrees true to a point where the Rhode Island-Massachusetts-Rhode Island and Massachusetts-Connecticut boundary to 42°03' N-73°30'W; thence south and west to 42°N - 73°35'W; thence west to 42°00' N- 74°28'W; thence north and west to 42°25'N - 75°25'W; thence west to 42°36'N - 76°55'W; thence south and west to 42°N - 78°28'W; thence south and west to 39°35'N - 80°20'W; thence south to the intersection with the northern border of North Carolina at 80°20'W; thence along the Virginia-North Carolina Boundary to the Atlantic Coast; thence continuing on an azimuth of 122° true to the limit of radar surveillance and controlled fighter-interceptor capability; and including the area eastward, to the limit of radar surveillance and controlled fighter-interceptor capability, adjacent to the Eastern Seaboard of that portion of the Continental United States as defined above. To support the operation of other commands as directed by this headquarters, and to participate in the United States Air Force collateral mission of antisubmarine warfare as directed by this headquarters and other current missions of the 26th Air Division (Defense). Attached below is the area of responsibility for the 26th Air Division

(Defense).

1948 - 1959 - 26th Air Defense Division

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Original 1952 emblem



16 Oct 86 - Proposed

Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 25 Aug 2010
Updated:

Sources
AFHRA