



United States Air Force facts

World War II had been over for two years and the Korean War lay three years ahead when the Air Force ended a 40-year association with the U.S. Army to become a separate service. The U.S. Air Force thus entered a new era in which airpower became firmly established as a major element of the nation's defense and one of its chief hopes for deterring war.

The Department of the Air Force was created when President Harry S Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947. It became effective Sept. 18, 1947, when Chief Justice Fred M. Vinson administered the oath of office to the first secretary of the Air Force, W. Stuart Symington, a position filled by presidential appointment.

Under the National Security Act, the functions assigned to the Army Air Force's commanding general transferred to the Department of the Air Force. The act provided for an orderly two-year transfer of these functions as well as property, personnel and records.

Later, under the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, the departments of Army, Navy and Air Force were eliminated from the chain of operational command. Commanders of unified and specified commands became responsible to the president and the secretary of defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The act redefined the functions of the military departments to those of essentially organizing, training, equipping and supporting combat forces for the unified and specified commands. Each military department retained resource management of its service.

Air Force Vision

The United States Air Force will be a trusted and reliable joint partner with our sister services known for integrity in all of our activities, including supporting the joint mission first and foremost. We will provide compelling air, space, and cyber capabilities for use by the combatant commanders. We will excel as stewards of all Air Force resources in service to the American people, while providing precise and reliable Global Vigilance, Reach and Power for the nation.

Air Force Mission

The mission of the U. S. Air Force is to fly, fight and win ... in air, space, and cyberspace.

Air Force Management

The Department of the Air Force incorporates all elements of the U.S. Air Force. It is administered by a civilian secretary appointed by the president and is supervised by a military chief of staff. The Secretariat and Air Staff help the secretary and the chief of staff direct the Air Force mission.

To assure unit preparedness and overall effectiveness of the Air Force, the secretary of the Air Force is responsible for and has the authority to conduct all affairs of the Department of the Air Force. This includes training, operations, administration, logistical support and maintenance, and welfare of personnel. The secretary's responsibilities include research and development, and any other activity prescribed by the president or the secretary of defense.

The secretary of the Air Force exercises authority through civilian assistants and the chief of staff, but retains

immediate supervision of activities that involve vital relationships with Congress, the secretary of defense, other governmental officials and the public.

Principal civilian assistants within the Secretariat are the assistant secretary for acquisition, assistant secretary for manpower and Reserve affairs, assistant secretary for installations, environment and logistics, and assistant secretary for financial management and comptroller.

The Office of the Secretary of the Air Force includes a general counsel, auditor general, inspector general, administrative assistant, public affairs director, legislative liaison director, small business director, warfighting integration and chief information officer, and certain statutory boards and committees.

The Air Staff

The chief of staff, U.S. Air Force, is appointed by the president, with the consent of the Senate, from among Air Force general officers - normally for a four-year term. The chief of staff serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Armed Forces Policy Council. In the JCS capacity, the chief is one of the military advisers to the president, the National Security Council and the secretary of defense. Also, the chief is the principal adviser to the secretary of the Air Force on Air Force activities.

The chief of staff presides over the Air Staff, transmits Air Staff plans and recommendations to the secretary of the Air Force and acts as the secretary's agent in carrying them out. The chief is responsible for the efficiency of the Air Force and the preparation of its forces for military operations. The chief of staff supervises the administration

of Air Force personnel assigned to unified organizations and unified and specified commands. Also, the chief supervises support of these forces assigned by the Air Force as directed by the secretary of defense. In addition, the chief of staff has responsibility for activities assigned to the Air Force by the secretary of defense.

Other members of the Air Staff are the vice chief of staff, assistant vice chief of staff, chief master sergeant of the Air Force, deputy chief of staff for manpower and personnel, deputy chief of staff for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, deputy chief of staff for operations, plans and requirements, deputy chief of staff for logistics, installations and mission support, deputy chief of staff for strategic plans and programs, assistant chief of staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration, chief of safety, director of analyses, assessments and lessons learned, judge advocate general, director of test and evaluation, surgeon general, Air Force historian, chief scientist, chief of the Air Force Reserve, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and chief of chaplain service.

Field Organizations

The ten major commands, field operating agencies, direct reporting units and their subordinate elements constitute the field organization that carries out the Air Force mission. In addition, there are two Reserve components, the Air Force Reserve, which is also a major command, and the Air National Guard.

Major commands are organized on a functional basis in the United States and a geographic basis overseas. They accomplish designated phases of Air Force worldwide activities. Also, they organize, administer, equip and train their subordinate elements for the accomplishment of assigned missions. Major commands generally are



assigned specific responsibilities based on functions. In descending order of command, elements of major commands include numbered air forces, wings, groups, squadrons and flights.

The basic unit for generating and employing combat capability is the wing, which has always been the Air Force's prime war-fighting instrument. Composite wings operate more than one kind of aircraft, and may be configured as self-contained units designated for quick air intervention anywhere in the world. Other wings continue to operate a single aircraft type ready to join air campaigns anywhere they are needed. Air base and specialized mission wings such as training, intelligence and test also support the Air Force mission. Within the wing, operations, logistics and support groups are the cornerstones of the organization.

Field operating agencies and direct reporting units are other Air Force subdivisions and report directly to Headquarters U.S. Air Force. They are assigned a specialized mission that is restricted in scope when compared to the mission of a major command.

Field operating agencies carry out field activities under the operational control of a Headquarters U.S. Air Force functional manager. Direct reporting units are not under the operational control of a Headquarters U.S. Air Force functional manager because of a unique mission, legal requirements or other factors.

Major Commands

- *Air Combat Command, Langley Air Force Base, Va.*
- *Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas*
- *Air Force Global Strike Command, Barksdale AFB, La.*
- *Air Force Materiel Command, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio*
- *Air Force Reserve Command, Robins AFB, Ga.*
- *Air Force Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colo.*
- *Air Force Special Operations Command, Hurlburt Field, Fla*
- *Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill.*
- *Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii*
- *U. S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein AB, Germany*