

## 401 AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

401 Bombardment Group (Heavy) established, 20 Mar 1943  
Activated, 1 Apr 1943  
Redesignated 401 Bombardment Group, Heavy, 11 Aug 1944  
Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945  
Redesignated 401 Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, 27 May 1947  
Activated in the Reserve on 26 Jun 1947  
Redesignated 401 Bombardment Group, Medium, 27 Jan 1949  
Ordered to active service, 1 May 1951  
Inactivated, 25 Jun 1951  
Redesignated 401 Fighter-Bomber Group, 24 Nov 1953  
Activated, 8 Feb 1954  
Inactivated, 25 Sep 1957

401 Fighter-Bomber Wing established, 23 Mar 1953  
Activated, 25 Sep 1957  
Redesignated 401 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1958

401 Fighter-Bomber Group and 401 Tactical Fighter Wing consolidated, 31 Jan 1984 retained  
401 TFW designation

Redesignated 401 Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1991  
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1994  
Redesignated 401 Air Expeditionary Wing, and converted to provisional status, 5 Feb 2001

## **STATIONS**

Ephrata AAB, WA, 1 Apr 1943  
Geiger Field, WA, Jun 1943  
Great Falls AAB, MT, Jul-Oct 1943  
Deenethorpe, England, 1 Nov 1943-May 1945  
Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 1-28 Aug 1945  
Brooks Field, TX, 26 Jun 1947  
Biggs AFB, TX, 27 Jun 1949-25 Jun 1951  
Alexandria AFB, LA, 8 Feb 1954  
Torrejon AB, Spain, 27 Apr 1966  
Aviano AB, Italy, 4 May 1992

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

17 Bombardment Training (later 17 Bombardment Operational Training Wing, 1 Apr –Oct 1943  
92 Combat Bombardment Wing (Heavy) Nov 1943  
94 Combat Bombardment Wing (Heavy) (Later 94 Combat Bombardment Wing, Heavy), 15 Dec 1943-Jun 1945  
Second Air Force 1-28 Aug 1945  
Tenth Air Force, 26 Jun 1947  
44 Bombardment Wing, Very Heavy (later, 44 Air Division, Bombardment), 17 Oct 1947  
Eighth AF, Nov 1943-Apr 1945  
Eighth Air Force, 27 Jun 1949-25 Jun 1951  
Ninth Air Force, 8 Feb 1954  
834 Air Division, 25 Sep 1957  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Apr 1959  
834 Air Division, 1 Jul 1964  
Sixteenth Air Force, 27 Apr 1966  
United States Air Forces in Europe to activate or inactivate at any time after 5 Feb 2001

## **ATTACHMENTS**

97 Bombardment Group, Medium, 27 Jun 1949-9 Feb 1951  
97 Bombardment Wing, Medium, 10 Feb-25 Jun 1951  
366 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 8 Feb 1954-24 Sep 1957  
Air Division Provisional, 4481<sup>st</sup>, 1 Jan-30 Jun 1964

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1943-1945  
AT-6, 1947-1949  
AT-11, 1947-1949  
B-29, 1948-1950  
B-50, 1950-1951  
F-86, 1954-1956

F-84, 1955-1957  
F-100, 1957-1970  
F-4, 1970-1983  
F-16, 1983-1992

### **COMMANDERS**

None (not manned), 1-21 Apr 1943  
Col Neil B. Harding, 22 Apr 1943  
Col Harold W. Bowman, 9 Jun 1943  
Lt Col Edwin W. Brown, 5 Dec 1944 (temporary)  
Lt Col (later, Col) William T. Seawell, 8 Dec 1944-Aug 1945  
Col Harry G. Libbey Jr, 26 Jun 1947-unkn  
Lt Col James L. Fletcher, (by Oct) 1948-unkn  
Unkn, 27 Jun 1949-25 Jun 1951  
Col Walter G. Benz, Jr., 8 Feb 1954  
Lt Col Ralph F. Newman, 1 Mar 1956  
Col Chester L. Van Etten, 2 Jun 1956  
Brig Gen Ivan W. McElroy, 1 Apr 1959  
Col Albert W. Schinz, 10 Jun 1960  
Col Niven K. Cranfill, 11 Mar 1962  
Col Richard V. Travis, 15 Mar 1962 (additional duty, 1 Jan-22 Sep 1964)  
Col William P. McBride, 23 Sep 1964  
Col Harold G. Shook, 14 Jun 1965  
Col Clayton M. Isaacson, 7 May 1966  
Col (later, BG) Sanford K. Moats, 20 Apr 1967  
Col Herndon F Williams, 2 Nov 1968  
Col James M. Hoag, Jr., 8 Jan 1970  
Col Wilbur L. Creech, 17 Nov 1970  
Col Tony M. Greget, 19 Jul 1971  
Col Richard G. Collins, 6 Sep 1972  
Col Charles L. Donnelly, Jr., 1 Nov 1973  
Col Benjamin R. Battle, 17 Jul 1975  
Col Anthony T. Sheehan, 14 Jul 1977  
Col Kenneth W. North, 12 Jun 1979  
Col Wilfred L. Goodson, 8 May 1981  
Col (later, BG) Albert L. Logan, 25 Jan 1982  
Col John C. Fryer, Jr., 29 Jun 1984  
Col Walter C. Hersman, 4 Oct 1985  
Col Lawrence Farrell, Jr., 17 Aug 1987  
Col Patrick O'Brien, 10 Aug 1988  
Col James Mathers, 20 Mar 1989  
Col Jerry Nelson, 16 Jul 1991  
Col James D. Kula 4 May 1992 (temporary)  
Col Timothy A. Kinnan 30 June 1992

Col John H. Campbell, 23 Aug 1993-1 Apr 1994

## HONORS

### Service Streamers

### Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

### Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Germany, 11 Jan 1944

Germany, 20 Feb 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan-31 Dec 1963

1 Jul 1983-31 Jun 1985

1 Apr 1989-31 Mar 1991

1 Apr 1992-31 Mar 1994

## EMBLEM



Azure, within a diminutive border argent a sheaf of four lances bend sinisterwise of the last, surmounted by a fess chequy sable and of the second overall a bend wavy vert, gules, or and of the first each fimbriated silver. The emblem is symbolic of the wing's primary mission. The light

blue background represents the sky, the primary theater of operations. The four lances denote the weapons stacked ready for instant use as needed. A black and white checkerboard battlefield, crossing the lances in a horizontal position, indicates the wing is willing to go into battle anywhere in the sky. The colors of the squadrons, attached to the wing, form a banner which sweeps across the entire emblem, indicating support to the overall mission. (Approved 9 Sep 1958. This insigne replaced an insigne approved, 22 Apr 1955)

### **MOTTO**

CAELUM ARENA NOSTRA—The sky is our arena

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Prepared for combat with B-17s beginning in Jun 1943. Moved to England, Oct-Nov 1943, and served with Eighth Air Force, Nov 1943-Apr 1945. The group's first mission on 26 Nov 1943 was against Bremen, Germany. Operated chiefly against strategic targets, bombing Industries, submarine facilities, shipyards, missile sites, marshaling yards, and airfields. Beginning in Oct 1944, concentrated on attacking enemy oil reserves. Received two Distinguished Unit Citations (DUCs) for missions against German aircraft production facilities on 11 Jan and 20 Feb 1944. In addition to strategic missions, also attacked Nazi transportation, airfields, and fortifications prior to the Normandy invasion and during D-Day, 6 Jun 1944; supported ground operations during the breakthrough at St Lo in Jul, the siege of Brest in Aug, and the airborne attack on Holland in Sep 1944. Participated in the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944 Jan 1945, assaulting transportation targets and communications in the battle area. Supported the airborne attack across the Rhine in Mar 1945. Evacuated allied former prisoners of war from Germany after the end of hostilities in May 1945. Returned to the U.S., May-Jun 1945 and inactivated on 28 Aug 1945.

First Mission: 26 Nov 1943

Last Mission: 20 Apr 1945

Total Missions: 255

Total Credit Sorties: 7,430

Total Bomb Tonnage: 17,778.1 tons (17.7 tons leaflets)

Aircraft missing in action: 95

Enemy Aircraft claims: 75-28-92

Redesignated 401 Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, on 27 May 1947. Activated in the Reserve at Brooks Field, Texas, on 26 Jun 1947. Redesignated 401 Bombardment Group, Medium, on 27 Jun 1949, and transferred without personnel to Biggs AFB, Texas. As a Strategic Air Command Corollary Unit, trained with the 97th Bombardment Group, and later with the 97th Bombardment Wing. Operated SAC B-29, and later, B-50. Ordered to active service on 1 May 1951, and inactivated on 25 Jun 1951. Trained for bombardment operations in the Reserve, 1947-1951.

Redesignated 401 Fighter-Bomber Group on 24 Nov 1953. Activated on 8 Feb 1954 at Alexandria AFB, La. Assigned to Tactical Air Command and equipped with F-86. Trained in tactical operations and participated in maneuvers, firepower demonstrations, and exercises in the U.S. and overseas. Converted to F-84 from February 1955 to April 1956. Began conversion to F-100 in May 1957. Was in the F-100 conversion process in September 1957 when the 401 Fighter-Bomber Wing replaced the 401 Group. The remaining F-84s on hand in September were not flown operationally and were finally transferred in December 1957. Between Mar 1955 and Feb 1964, the tactical squadrons deployed frequently to bases in Europe and the Middle East, particularly to Aviano AB, Italy, and Incirlik and Cigli AB, Turkey, in support of NATO operations.



Col Walter G. Benz, Jr.,

From 19 Oct to 5 Dec 1962, during the Cuban missile crisis, all wing tactical and support elements not deployed overseas operated from Homestead AFB, Fla. From Feb 1964 to Nov 1965, squadron deployments shifted to the Far East and Southeast Asia in support of operations in that area, then returned to support operations in Europe-Middle East.

The 401 manned a provisional air division at England AFB, 1 Jan-30 Jun 1964, from wing resources, in preparation for the beddown of a second tactical fighter wing at the base. The wing commanding officer, Col R V Travis, commanded the Air Division Provisional, 4481st, and the 834th Air Division from 1 Jan to 22 Sep 1964, while simultaneously commanding the 401 Wing.

The 401 TFW moved to Torrejon AB, Spain, in April 1966. The 613th TFS also moved, but the 614th and 615th remained at England AFB. Instead, the wing gained the 307th and 353d TFS from other OS bases. The wing's maintenance units also moved from the US to Torrejon, Spain, and the wing gained the 401 Combat Support Group, the 401 Tactical Hospital, and the 401 Supply Squadron. The wing conducted local alert, supported the Spanish air defense system, and became USAFE's primary non-nuclear contingency operations wing. Except for periods when the wing converted from one weapons system to another and briefly during the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the wing maintained rotational forces in other European and Middle

Eastern locations, primarily Incirlik, Turkey, and Aviano AB, Italy. Wing aircraft also operated from numerous American and NATO bases during exercises.

Began converting from F-100 to F-4 in June 1969. In December 1969, began transferring F-100s to the Turkish Air Force, with the last F-100 departing in March 1970. Began receiving F-4 in January 1970.

On 15 Jul 1971, in a switch of units in name only, the 307th and 353d TFS returned to the US and the 612th and 614th TFS moved without personnel and equipment to Torrejon from the Republic of Vietnam.

Except for periods when the wing converted from one weapons system to another and briefly during the 1974 Turkish invasion of Cyprus, the wing maintained rotational forces in other European and Middle Eastern location, primarily Incirlik, Turkey and Aviano AB, Italy. Wing aircraft also operated from numerous American and NATO bases during exercises. On 15 Jul 1971, in a switch of units in name only, the 612th and 614th TFS moved without personnel and equipment to rejoin the wing at Torrejon.

In May 1972, HQ USAFE assumed direct operational control of the wing, although Sixteenth Air Force remained the wing's command parent unit. The wing assumed caretaker duties of the closed Moron AB, Spain, on 1 Jan 1976. Operating Location "A" of HQ 401 TFW was established at Moron AB on 1 Jan 1976. OL A was later replaced by Detachment 2 of the HQ 401 TFW on 1 Aug 1976.

Began receiving F-16 aircraft in February 1983. The last F-4 returned to Torrejon from rotational duties at Aviano on 1 Jul 1983, and the last F-4 left Torrejon for the US on 15 Sep 1983.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the 614th deployed to Doha Aprt, Qatar, 29 Aug 1990-29 Mar 1991. The 612th deployed to Incirlik AB and integrated into the 7440 Provisional Combat Wing, 16 Jan-18 Mar 1991. Both squadrons flew combat missions during the Persian Gulf War against Iraq. Beginning 1 Jul 1991, the 401 Wing began inactivating its flying squadrons and transferring its F-16s to other USAFE bases and to the U.S. On 4 May 1992 the 401 moved without personnel or equipment to Aviano AB, Italy and assumed the resources of the 401 Support Wing. Began preparing Aviano for the permanent beddown of two fighter squadrons. In Apr 1993, began supporting the deployment to Aviano of USAF, USMC, Reserve, and ANG land-based forces participating in Operation Deny Flight, enforcing an air exclusion zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina, and later providing air-ground support over the same area. In another paper action, the 401 inactivated and was replaced by the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano on 1 Apr 1994.

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## USAF Unit Histories

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### Sources

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