

## 917 WING



### MISSION

The 917 is a composite wing which operates both the A-10A and the B-52H. Located at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., the Wing employs approximately 1,600 Air Force Reserve personnel. The mission of the 47th Fighter Squadron is to train student pilots to fly the A-10. The primary mission of the 93rd Bomb Squadron is to conduct strategic heavy bombardment and maritime operations in the B-52.

### LINEAGE

917 Troop Carrier Group, Heavy established and activated, 28 Dec 1962  
Organized in the Reserve, 17 Jan 1963  
Redesignated 917 Air Transport Group, Heavy, 1 Dec 1965  
Redesignated 917 Military Airlift Group, 1 Jan 1966  
Redesignated 917 Special Operations Group, 1 Apr 1972  
Redesignated 917 Tactical Fighter Group, 1 Oct 1973  
Redesignated 917 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1987  
Redesignated 917 Fighter Wing, 1 Feb 1992  
Redesignated 917 Wing, 1 Oct 1993  
Inactivated, 1 Jan 2011

### STATIONS

Barksdale AFB, LA, 17 Jan 1963

### ASSIGNMENTS

Continental Air Command, 28 Dec 1962  
435 Troop Carrier Wing, 17 Jan 1963  
442 Troop Carrier Wing, 1 Jul 1963

512 Troop Carrier (later, 512 Air Transport; 512 Military Airlift) Wing, 5 Feb 1965  
446 Tactical Airlift Wing, 21 Apr 1971  
434 Special Operations (later, 434 Tactical Fighter) Wing, 25 Feb 1972  
Tenth Air Force, 1 Jul 1987

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-124, 1963-1972  
A-37, 1972-1980  
A-10, 1980  
B-52, 1993

### **COMMANDERS**

LTC William G. Paine, 17 Jan 1963  
Maj Raymond L. Armour, 22 Aug 1966  
Col William A. Willis, 19 Sep 1966  
Col Edward J. Struewing Jr., 12 Oct 1968  
LTC Lafate King, 18 Oct 1971  
Col Charles E. Jones III, 25 May 1972  
LTC Marc M. McClelland, by Mar 1974  
Col Ralph D. Erwin, c. Jun 1976  
Col Benjamin Voss, 18 Jun 1978  
Col John J. Closner III, 10 Aug 1978  
Col David R. Smith, 21 Aug 1983  
LTC David E. Tanzi, 4 Aug 1986  
BG William D. Tracy, 1 Jul 1987  
BG William H. Lawson, 15 Jul 1994  
Col Bob Tarter, 2005

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
1 Aug 1967-25 Oct 1968  
2 Jul 1993-1 Jul 1995  
1 Oct 1997-30 Sep 1999

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm  
1 Apr 1966-31 Mar 1972  
26-28 Oct 1972

## EMBLEM

Approved on 16 Nov 1989



## MOTTO

## NICKNAME

## OPERATIONS

The 917 Fighter Group was originally formed as the 917 Troop Carrier Group on Jan. 17, 1963, at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., and was assigned to the 435th Troop Carrier Wing. Its mission was to administer and support its assigned 78th Troop Carrier Squadron, which was equipped

with C-124s.

On July 1, 1963, both the group and squadron were reassigned to the 442nd Troop Carrier Wing because their new gaining command, Military Air Transport Service, wanted all five Air Force Reserve C-124 Groups assigned to the same wing. The units were reassigned to the 512th Troop Carrier Wing on March 25, 1965.

Reflecting similar changes in the active force, the 917 was re-designated twice -- to the 917 Air Transport Group in 1965, and then to the 917 Military Airlift Group in 1966. The 917 Military Airlift Group was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for its exceptional safety record of more than 55,000 accident-free flying hours and global support missions.

As the A-37 Dragonfly conversion began on April 13, 1971, the group was reassigned to the 434th Special Operations Wing. On April 26, 1972, the unit was re-designated the 917 Special Operations Group, with Tactical Air Command as the gaining major air command.

As the hardware and missions changed, the unit was re-designated the 917 Tactical Fighter Group on October 1, 1973. The 78 Troop Carrier Squadron was subsequently deactivated and replaced by the 47th Tactical Fighter Squadron.

Assigned to the 434 Tactical Fighter Wing at Grissom Air Force Base, Ind., the 917 reached combat-ready status 45 days ahead of schedule and garnered honors as the first fighter group in the Air Force Reserve to achieve this distinction.

When the A-37B Dragonfly was eventually phased out, the group converted to the A-10 Thunderbolt II airframe. The 917 TFG assumed replacement-training responsibilities on October 1, 1983. This ultimately led to the creation of the 46th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron, in addition to the 926th Tactical Fighter Group in New Orleans, La.

Due to Air Force restructuring in June 1992, Tactical Air Command was combined with Strategic Air Command to form Air Combat Command. The 917 Tactical Fighter Wing joined Air Combat Command and "Tactical" was dropped from its name.

On Oct. 1, 1993, the 917 Fighter Wing saw important changes once again. The 46th Fighter Training Squadron was inactivated when the active-duty Air Force took control of all fighter replacement training. On this same day, the 917 became the first unit in Air Force Reserve history to acquire a strategic mission: B-52s were added to the wing make-up and the 93rd Bomb Squadron was activated with ten B-52s. Now a composite wing, the 917 dropped "Fighter" from its name and became the 917 Wing.

In December 1993, the wing deployed its A-10 aircraft, personnel and equipment to Aviano Air Base, Italy, to support the United Nations' no-fly rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dubbed "Operation Deny Flight," the 917 returned to Aviano Air Base in August 1994 and again in May 1995 to uphold the U.N. ban on military flights in the Bosnia-Herzegovina airspace.

In November 1995, the 917 Wing was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, for exceptionally meritorious service during deployments to support Operation Deny Flight and successfully converting a fighter unit to the Reserve's first heavy bomber unit. Oct. 7, 1996, marked the return of pilot training to the 917 as the 47th Fighter Squadron became an A-10 replacement-training unit.

On 1 Oct 1996, the 917 Wing once again began training A-10 pilots with the 47th FS augmenting the 355th Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB. The 47th FS is programmed to train 43 Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve A-10 pilots each year.

The Wing again received the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in December 1999, primarily for winning the Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award and Secretary of Defense Award for the Self-Inspection Tracking System. The award also noted the unit's sponsorship of the STARBASE program. Which creates interest in math, science, and technology by using an aviation theme.

In Aug 2003, Wing personnel returned to Barksdale where they remain operation ready to support and defend. In December 2003 the Wing was again awarded the Outstanding Unit Award for their participation in the war against terrorism for the period 1 Oct 01 - 1 Aug 03.

When the 917 Wing's 93rd Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., acquired its first eight B-52s on Dec. 7, 1993, they were configured to support a nuclear mission. However, the aircraft were never needed for that role — that is, until now. The 917 has been tasked to join its regular Air Force partner at Barksdale in the nuclear mission under a Total Force Integration initiative between Air Combat Command and Air Force Reserve Command. TFI is a means to increase the Air Force's capabilities by having members of the regular and reserve components work together.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz formally approved the TFI initiative March 9. Under the initiative, the 93rd BS, which is currently a combat-coded unit, will transition to a B-52 formal training unit or schoolhouse, said Col. Edmund Walker, 917 WG commander. Colonel Walker said the squadron's aircraft complement is expected to grow from eight to 16 by this summer, with the new assets transferring over from Barksdale's regular Air Force 2nd Bomb Wing.

As part of the initiative, the 2nd BW's 11th BS, which currently serves as a B-52 FTU, will become an active associate to the 93rd. It will no longer operate its own aircraft. On the maintenance side, Colonel Walker said, Airmen of the 2nd BW will work with the Reserve wing's maintenance group to keep the training aircraft flying. All in all, the Air Force will reassign 400 Airmen from the 2nd BW to the active associate unit. When the transition to an FTU is complete, the 93rd BS, along with its 11th BS partners, will be responsible for training 100 percent of B-52 crewmembers — pilots, navigators and electronic warfare officers — in both the nuclear and conventional missions.

Reserve aircrews from the 93rd will form a classic association with the 2nd BW. The name of this associate squadron has yet to be determined. These Reservists will participate in the conventional and nuclear-related activities of the active-duty wing. They will also deploy with

the B-52s, the colonel said. "We are working the process now, with leadership approval, of being named the 343rd Bomb Squadron as a detachment of the 917 Wing," said Lt. Col. Jeff Stogsdill, 93rd BS detachment commander. "(Originally) the 343rd began here at Barksdale on Jan. 28, 1942."

The 343rd's Lt. Donald Puckett was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in Operation Tidal Wave, better known as the raid on the Ploesti oil refineries in Romania during World War II, Colonel Stogsdill said. While it's a historic event, incorporating the Reserve into the nuclear mission does have its challenges. "The idea of a Reserve bomb squadron with a nuclear mission has been broached before but was determined impractical," Colonel Stogsdill said. "The last decade has seen quite a bit more emphasis on the Air Force Reserve's role in national defense. "The most challenging factor will be balancing requirements with the traditional Reservists' availability. Volunteerism will be the deal maker."

As part of the overall plan at Barksdale, ACC will strengthen its nuclear and conventional force presentation to combatant commanders by establishing an operational B-52 squadron, bringing the total number of units involved in the TFI initiative to four. The final decision to stand up the fourth squadron at Barksdale was made after an environmental impact analysis was completed. The analysis was required under the National Environmental Policy Act. Total funding of \$11.8 million, including operations and maintenance design funds, will be required to achieve permanent beddown of the 93rd BS.

This could mean a shot in the arm to the local economy. But, there are other benefits to be realized from the reorganization. "There are two major benefits in having the Reserve assume this training role," said Lt. Col. Keith D. Schultz, 93rd commander. "First is the cost savings. Reservists have a long-standing reputation of bringing highly experienced and qualified members performing the same mission as their active-duty counterparts without having to pay for the full-time salaries and associated benefits.

"Secondly, our members are soundly rooted in the community and remain faithfully committed to their mission year after year without the constant need for diversification and forced relocation assignments. This allows them to focus on the task at hand as a permanent cornerstone of expertise in the training arena." Implementation of the reorganization has already begun. "The 93rd BS is ahead of scheduled milestones in converting combat-ready crew members into (FTU) flight instructors," Colonel Schultz said.

"We currently have 30 percent of our crew force through the formal training certification. Our goal is to have all of the Reserve squadron members fully trained and certified to conduct flight line training operations by June 1." Other phases of the reorganization are on schedule as well, Colonel Stogsdill said. The classic associate unit is incrementally working toward being fully mission ready by Nov. 1. "I believe this is historic. When I first joined the Army Reserve in college, it was truly one weekend a month and two weeks a year. It's definitely more than that now," Colonel Stogsdill said.

"We have traditional Reservists who work here more than 150 days per year. What makes this nuclear role unique is it will be very difficult if this squadron is comprised of individuals who can only give the minimum time. The full-time cadre is here specifically to minimize 'reinventing the wheel' every time the 'part-timers' show up. Right now, we have an initial contingent of Citizen Airmen who are very motivated to make this work. "The full spectrum of experience is here in the 917 Wing," the colonel said.

“Our youngest people in the 917 are some of the most innovative and hardest-working people I know. Coupled with quite a few gray hairs who actually have years of Strategic Air Command experience, I think we will bring different efficiencies and perspectives to our active-duty brothers and sisters. We always get a little chuckle out of buzzwords, but the synergy of active duty and the Reserve working together will only enhance the war-fighting ability of the Air Force.” 2009

Barksdale Reservists Reorganizing Air Force Reserve Command officials are making organizational changes at Barksdale AFB, La., to improve Reservists' support of B-52 operations there. On 1 Jan, AFRC will inactivate Barksdale's 917 Wing, which consists today of B-52 squadrons and an A-10 ground-attack unit, wing spokeswoman Jessica d'Aurizio, told the Daily Report Monday. At the same time, the command will reactivate the 307th Bomb Wing, a unit with a Cold War heritage, to subsume those B-52 units: the 93rd Bomb Squadron, 343rd BS, plus maintenance and support elements.

The 93rd BS is the Air Force's sole B-52 schoolhouse, while 343rd BS airmen support the operations of Barksdale's active duty 2nd BW. Meanwhile, the inactivating 917 Wing's A-10s of the 47th Fighter Squadron will remain at Barksdale, but transfer to the organizational control of AFRC's 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., said d'Aurizio. These moves will "make us more efficient and allow us to concentrate on the B-52 mission," she said. The 47th FS is transitioning from a training unit to combat-coded status, she noted. Barksdale will host a ceremony on Jan. 8, with Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Air Force Reserve chief, presiding, to mark these changes, she said. 2010

When the 917 Wing was inactivated here Jan. 8, it did not signal the end of the 917 designation because the wing's 917 Operations Group was redesignated as the 917 Fighter Group. In a ceremony presided over by Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner Jr., commander of Air Force Reserve Command, the flag of the 917 Fighter Group was uncased, formally redesignating it as an A-10 Thunderbolt II unit. Col. Eric Overturf, commander of the 442nd Fighter Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., accepted the new flag from General Stenner. The new fighter group is now part of the 442nd FW. The 917 Wing flag was furled and encased, thus signifying the end of the wing's mission and serving as a final symbol of closure for all those, past and present, who were a part of the wing.

The A-10 close-air-support aircraft previously assigned to the 917 WG will remain at Barksdale. The fighter group will be assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., and will be gained by Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va. “We’re losing the A-10s to Whiteman, but they’ll still be here. We will still support them, but we are focusing on the bombers,” said Brig. Gen. John J. Mooney III, 307th Bomb Wing commander and former commander of the 917 Wing. The 917 Wing started in 1963 at Barksdale as a troop carrier. General Stenner noted that its lineage has changed over the years, but the unit has never deactivated. He said members of the unit, past and present, can be proud of what they have achieved and will continue to achieve.

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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