

AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND



MISSION

Provided for the air defense of the United States. Organized, administered, trained, and maintained aircraft warning and control units.

LINEAGE

Air Defense Command established, 21 Mar 1946

Activated as a major command, 27 Mar 1946

Became a subordinate operational command of Continental Air Command, 1 Dec 1948

Discontinued, 1 Jul 1950

Reestablished as a major command and organized, 1 Jan 1951

Redesignated Aerospace Defense Command, 15 Jan 1968

Inactivated, 31 Mar 1980

STATIONS

Mitchel Field, NY

Ent AFB CO, 8 Jan 1951

Colorado Springs, CO, 1 Dec 1979

COMMANDERS

Lt Gen George E. Stratemeyer, 27 Mar 1946

Maj Gen Gordon P. Saville, 1 Dec 1948

Lt Gen Ennis C. Whitehead, 1 Jan 1951

Gen Benjamin W. Chidlaw, 25 Aug 1951

Maj Gen Frederic H. Smith, Jr. (acting), 1 Jun 1955

Gen Earle E. Partridge, 20 Jul 1955

Lt Gen Joseph H. Atkinson, 17 Sep 1956
Lt Gen Robert M. Lee, 1 Mar 1961
Maj Gen Gen Robert H. Terrill (acting), 6 Jul 1961
Lt Gen Herbert B. Thatcher, 1 Aug 1963
Lt Gen Arthur C. Agan, Jr., 1 Aug 1967
Lt Ggen Thomas K. McGehee, 1 Mar 1970
Gen Seth J. McKee, 1 Jul 1973
Gen Lucius D. Clay, Jr., 1 Oct 1973
Gen Daniel James, Jr., 1 Sep 1975
Gen James E. Hill, 6 Dec 1977
Gen James V. Hartinger, 1 Jan 1980-31 Mar 1980

EMBLEM



Air Defense Command Against the background of a light blue shield, outlined in black, is a brown eagle of the United States with white head, orange beak and talons, soaring over the northern hemisphere showing the land mass of the North American Continent in gold and the water area in medium blue. Grasped tenaciously in the eagle's talons is a red lightning bolt. Attached to the bottom of the shield is a gold scroll with AIR DEFENSE COMMAND in black lettering. All outlines are in black. Significance: The blue background of the shield signifies the air. The eagle in flight represents the Eagle of the United States vigilantly guarding the North American Continent - the heritage we value. The bolt of lightning in the eagle's talons symbolizes the strength and rapidity with which the Air Defense Command is prepared to meet any aggressor. Approved: 19 April 1955.

Aerospace Defense Command: On a shield azure (light blue), over a demi-sphere issuing from base proper (medium blue), the land masses or, grid lines sable, enveloped by two satellites in orbital rings saltirewise argent, an eagle proper, contourne volant, and regardant over the northern area of the sphere, grasping with his talons a bolt of lightning gules, all within a diminished bordure or. Motto: SHIELD FOR FREEDOM. Significance: The blue background of the shield signifies the air. The Aerospace Defense eagle in flight is vigilantly guarding the world, the

heritage we value. His position in flight and his stern gaze toward the perimeter of the Northern Hemisphere represent his awareness of the shortest distance from which a potential aggressor could attack his area of defense. The bolt of lightning in the eagle's talons symbolizes the strength and rapidity with which the Aerospace Defense Command is prepared to meet any aggressor. Approved: 24 April 1968.

OPERATIONS

The War Department established an Air Defense Command on 26 Feb 1940. This command, operating under the control of the First Army Commander from 2 Mar 1940, to 9 Sep 1941, engaged in planning for air defense. Before the United States entered World War II, air defense was divided among the four air districts later, First, Second, Third, and Fourth Air Forces based in the United States. In mid-1944, when the threat of air attack seemed negligible, this air defense organization was disbanded. Subsequently, no real air defense organization existed until the second Air Defense Command was established in 1946 as a major command of the Army Air Forces (AAF).

Air Defense Command, established in Mar 1946, had responsibility for the organization and training of the Air Reserve. The first objective of the initial plan was to activate 40 of 130 planned Reserve training bases.

In 1979, after several years of planning, Headquarters USAF directed that the Aerospace Defense Command (ADCOM) be reorganized and its resources be divided among Tactical Air Command, Air Force Communications Service, and Strategic Air Command. Under the reorganization, SAC acquired resource management responsibilities for ADCOM's space surveillance and missile warning systems. The North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) retained operational control over these systems. The transfer actions were completed on 1 December, at which time SAC received the space surveillance and missile warning system units and several installations and small sites throughout the United States and at various overseas locations.

The Aerospace Defense Command declined after the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve gradually assumed more and more of the air defense mission and ultimately inactivated in 1980

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.