

321 AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING



MISSION

The 321 Air Expeditionary Wing trains, advises, and assists the Iraqi Air Force to develop as a professional and credible regional airpower partner, with the foundational and enduring capabilities to maintain internal security and defend against external threats; provide aerial port, airfield operations, base and medical support, and command and control.

LINEAGE

321 Bombardment Group (Medium) constituted, 19 Jun 1942

Activated, 26 Jun 1942

Redesignated 321 Bombardment Group, Medium, 31 Aug 1944

Inactivated, 12 Sep 1945

Redesignated 321 Bombardment Group, Light

Activated in the Reserve, 29 Jun 1947

Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949

321 Bombardment Wing, Medium established, 23 Mar 1953

Activated, 15 Dec 1953

Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Oct 1961

Redesignated 321 Strategic Missile Wing and activated, 14 Aug 1964

Organized, 1 Nov 1964

321 Bombardment Group, Light and 321 Strategic Missile Wing consolidated, 31 Jan 1984

Consolidated unit designated 321 Strategic Missile Wing.

Redesignated 321 Missile Wing, 1 Sep 1991

Redesignated 321 Missile Group, 1 Jul 1994
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1998
Redesignated 321 Air Expeditionary Group, converted to provisional status and assigned to Air
Combat Command to activate or inactivate any time after 1 Oct 2001
Redesignated 321 Air Expeditionary Wing, 20 Aug 2002
Inactivated, 22 Dec 2011
Activated, 20 Jul 2018

STATIONS

Barksdale Field, LA, 26 Jun 1942
Columbia AAB, SC, 1 Aug 1942
Walterboro, SC, Sep 1942
DeRidder AAB, LA, 1 Dec 1942-21 Jan 1943
Ain M'lila, Algeria, 12 Mar 1943
Souk-el-Arba, Tunisia, 1 Jun 1943
Soliman, Tunisia, 8 Aug 1943
Grottaglie, Italy, 3 Oct 1943
Amendola, Italy, 20 Nov 1943
Vincenzo Airfield, Italy, 14 Jan 1944
Gaudo Airfield, Italy, Feb 1944
Corsica, 23 Apr 1944
Falconara, Italy, 1 Apr 1945
Pomigliano, Italy, Sep-12 Sep 1945
Mansfield, Ohio, 29 Jun 1947-27 Jun 1949
Pinecastle AFB (later McCoy AFB), FL, 15 Dec 1953 – 25 Oct 1961
Grand Forks AFB, ND, 1 Nov 1964 – 30 Sep 1998
Masirah Island Air Base, Oman, 2001–2004
Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, 2 Jul 2020 – 16 Jun 2021
Ft. Lee, VA, 28 Jul 2021

DEPLOYED

Lakenheath, England, 9 Dec 1954-9 Mar 1955

ASSIGNMENTS

III Bomber Command, 26 Jun 1942 – 21 Jan 1943
47 Bombardment Wing, 12 Mar 1943
57 Bombardment Wing, 8 Aug 1943 – 12 Sep 1945
Eleventh Air Force, 29 June 1947
12 Bombardment Wing (Later, 12 Air Division), 1 Oct 1947 – 27 Jun 1949
Second Air Force, 15 Dec 1953
813 Air Division, 15 Jul 1954
Second Air Force, 1 Jun 1956
6 Air Division, 1 Jan 1959
Eighth Air Force, 1 Feb 1959

6 Air Division, 1 Jul 1959
823 Air Division, 6 Feb-25 Oct 1961
Strategic Air Command, 14 Aug 1964
4 Strategic Aerospace (later, 4 Strategic Missile; 4 Air) Division, 1 Nov 1964
57 Air Division, 22 Jan 1975
4 Air Division, 1 May 1982
57 Air Division, 23 Jan 1987
42 Air Division, 16 Jun 1988
Eighth Air Force, 9 Jul 1991
Twentieth Air Force, 1 Sep 1991-30 Sep 1998
Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at anytime after 4 Dec 2001
1 Air Expeditionary Task Force 28 July 2021

ATTACHMENTS

Northwest African Strategic Air Force
Mediterranean Allied Tactical Bomber Force Jan 44 – Feb 44
Air Division Provisional, 813, 11 Jun-14 Jul 1954)
7 Air Division, 9 Dec 1954-5 Mar 1955
5 Air Division, 9 Apr-3 Jul 1956

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-25, 1942
B-47, 1954-1961
KC-97, 1954-1956
C-124, 1959-1961
LGM-30F Minuteman II, 1965–1973
LGM-30G Minuteman III, 1972–1998

COMMANDERS

None (not manned), 26 Jun-31 Jul 1942
Maj Charles T. Olmsted, 1 Aug 1942
Col William C. Mills, 3 Aug 1942
Col Robert D. Knapp, Sep 1942
Lt Col Charles T. Olmsted, 5 Dec 1943
Lt Col Peter H. Remington, 18 Mar 1944
Col Richard H. Smith, 26 Mar 1944
Lt Col Charles F. Cassidy Jr., 28 Jan 1945-unkn
None (not manned), 15 Dec 1953-24 May 1954
Col Michael N. M. McCoy, 24 May 1954 (additional duty), 1 Jun 1954 (permanent)
Col William L. Gray, 9 Oct 1957
Col Robert W. Strong, Jr., 18 Oct 1957
Col Clifford V. Warden, 1 Jul 1959
Col Winton R. Close, 16 Jul 1959
Lt Col Harry F. Baker, 15 Sep-25 Oct 1961

None (not manned), 14 Aug-31 Oct 1964
Col Gilbert F. Friederichs, 1 Nov 1964
Col Jack D. Lander, 31 May 1967
Col Gerald G. Fall, Jr., 21 Jun 1967
Brig Gen Paul Krause, 23 May 1970
Col Oliver C. Fought, 31 Jul 1972
Brig Gen Paul Krause, 15 Sep 1972
Col Stuart H. Sherman, Jr., 8 Nov 1972
Brig Gen William L. Shields, Jr., 16 Feb 1974
Col Joe L. Church, 10 Mar 1976
Col George Holt, Jr, 4 Oct 1977
Col Kenneth L. Holden, 12 Sep 1978
Col Nathan Hartman, 10 Mar 1980
Col Frank B. Horton, 7 Jul 1982
Col Kenneth B. Van Dillen, 18 Sep 1984
Col Robert W. Parker, 25 Nov 1985
Col Rickell D. Knoll, 8 Jun 1987
Col Lance W. Lord, 23 Feb 1989
Col James H. Reid, 31 May 1990
Col Jerry M. Drennan, 23 Jun 1992
Col John P. Gibeau, 10 Jun 1993
Col Robert P. Summers, 5 Jul 1995
Col Richard E. Webber, 1 Jul 1996
Col Edward W. Rausch, 8 Oct 1997
Col J.D. Smith, 2 July 2002
Col Charles W. Fox, 16 Sep 2003
Lt Col Kent A. Valentine, 22 Nov 2003-20 Jan 2004
Maj Gen Robert C. Kane, 3 Jan 2009
Brig Gen Scott M. Hanson, 2 Jan 2010
Brig Gen Anthony J. Rock, 6 Jan 2011
Brig Gen Brook Leonard, 27 Jul 2018-26 Jul 2019
Col Christopher G Clark, July 2, 2020 - June 16, 2021
Col Jennifer T. Baggott, July 28, 2021

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Rome-Arno

Southern France

North Apennines
Central Europe
Po Valley

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Athens, Greece, 8 Oct 1943
France, 18 Aug 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jul 1968-30 Jun 1969
1 Jul 1985-30 Jun 1987
1 Oct 1994-30 Sep 1996
1 Oct 1996-30 Sep 1997

EMBLEM



321 Bombardment Group, Medium emblem: Azure, six drop bombs, three, two, and one or.
(Approved, 7 Nov 1942)



321 Bombardment Wing, Medium emblem



321 Strategic Missile Wing emblem: blue, on a pile fimbriated gold between in base a wreath of laurel in dexter and a wreath of olive in sinister, each of eight leaves gold garnished brown, six stars three, two, gold and one white with a red disc in center; all within a diminished bordure gold. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the squadron and its mission. The six stars represent instantaneous response to orders. The triangle depicts the early wedge-shaped battle formation while the stars, three-two-one, reflect the countdown and blast-off of missile warfare and the wing's 321st designation. The wing's WWII honors are commemorated with the laurel; the olive wreath represents peace and SAC's goal of "Power for Peace." (Approved, 27 Dec 1965)



321 Missile Wing emblem



321 Missile Group On a shield azure, six golden yellow bombs dropping in a three, two, one configuration or. **SIGNIFICANCE:** As a reminder of the ideals of the past, the unit denotes its designation through the use of six bombs dropping in a three-two-one configuration. The motto brings to life a motto used by the 321 Bombardment Wing which flew 847 aircraft in the 1950s, POWER FOR PEACE. Today's mission of nuclear deterrence is symbolized with GLOBAL POWER. Together, GLOBAL POWER FOR PEACE stands as a symbol for the future with a keen sense of the past. (Approved, 1 Jul 1994)

MOTTO

GLOBAL POWER FOR PEACE

PERSISTENCE, VISION, AND DUTY



321st Air Expeditionary Wing emblem: On a disc Light Blue, in base a wreath of laurel and a wreath of olive conjoined Or, surmounted by a pile Azure, fimbriated Or, charged with six mullets, three, two and one, the first five of the last, the mullet in nombril point Argent bearing a tureau, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "SKILL PROFESSIONALISM DETERMINATION" in Blue letters. Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The formation of the stars represents the early wedge-shaped battle formation. The stars in the three-two-one grouping denote the countdown to blastoff of missile warfare as well as the unit's numerical designation. The laurel wreath symbolizes honors received in combat. The olive wreath represents peace. Together, the laurel and olive wreaths commemorate 11 campaign participation credits and distinguished unit citations earned during World War II by the 321st Bombardment Group, an early component of the unit. The olive wreath also refers to SAC and the Air Force goal of "Power for Peace" and indicates the unit's high level of responsibility. (Approved, 27 Dec 1965)

MOTTO

SKILL-PROFESSIONALISM-DETERMINATION

OPERATIONS

Engaged primarily in support and interdiction operations, bombing marshalling yards, rail lines, highways, bridges, viaducts, troop concentrations, gun emplacements, shipping, harbors, and other objectives in North Africa, France, Sicily, Italy, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Sometimes dropped propaganda leaflets behind enemy lines. Took part in the Allied operations against Axis forces in North Africa during Mar-May 1943, the reduction of Pantelleria and Lampedusa in Jun, the invasion of Sicily in Jul, the landing at Salerno in Sep, the Allied advance toward Rome during Jan-Jun 1944, the invasion of Southern France in Aug 1944, and the Allied operations in northern Italy from Sep 1944 to Apr 1945. Received two DUC's: for completing a raid on an airdrome near Athens, 8 Oct 1943, in spite of intense flak and attacks by numerous enemy interceptors; and for bombing a battleship, a cruiser, and a submarine in Toulon harbor on 18 Aug 1944 to assist the Allied invasion of Southern France.

On the 15th of December, 1953, the 321st Bombardment Wing was activated and the following spring on the 24th of May, Colonel Michael N. McCoy was appointed its commander. By June the 321st was fully operational as a combat unit of the Strategic Air Command, and took over the installation from Training Command. One month later the 19th Bomb Wing joined the 321st and the two units came under the control of the 813th Air Division, commanded by Brigadier General Keith K. Compton. The 813th was subsequently inactivated in the summer of 1956 when the 19th Bomb Wing moved to Homestead Air Force Base near Miami, Florida, and the base again came under the control of Colonel McCoy and the 321st.

On 30 May 1954, the 321st Bombardment Wing (Medium) was activated at Pinecastle Air Force Base, Florida, absorbing the B-47 and KC-97 of the inactivated 4240th Flying Training Wing. Two weeks later, on 1 January 1954, the wing was assigned to Strategic Air Command a B-47 combat crew training mission was transferred to SAC. Colonel Michael N.W. McCoy was appointed commander of the 321st Bombardment Wing on 24 May 1954.

Absorbed resources of 4042d Flying Training Wing in late May 1954. Conducted global bombardment training and air refueling operations to meet SAC commitments, 1954-1961.

Wing deployed at RAF Station Lakenheath, England, 9 Dec 1954-5 Mar 1955, and at Sidi Slimane AB, Morocco, 9 Apr-3 Jul 1956.

The first complete reorganization of the base since the activation of the 321st Bomb Wing began in the summer of 1961. A program got under way to convert the base from B-47's to heavy B-52's bombers. The 321st Bomb Wing began phasing out its operations in June 1961.

On 1 November 1963, 321st Strategic Missile Wing was organized as the first Strategic Air Command LGM-30 Minuteman II intercontinental ballistic missile wing, at Grand Forks AFB, ND.

The new home of the 321SMW was a four story, concrete blockhouse built for the Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE), a computerized air defense system built in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During the short life of the SAGE system, it evolved from numerous control centers like the one at Grand Forks to a few scattered across the perimeter of the United States. The initial manning of the 321SMW consisted of many officers, noncommissioned officers and airmen who served in Atlas, Titan I and Mace units.

During 1965, the wing's three missile squadrons were activated and crew training and certification began at Vandenberg AFB, CA. In August 1965, the base received its first Minuteman II missile, shipped by train from Assembly Plant 77 at Hill AFB, Utah. During the following March, the base received the first Minuteman II to be shipped via aircraft, an Air Force first.

On 25 April 1966, the 447th Strategic Missile Squadron and its 50 Minuteman II missiles were declared operational. Additional flights came on line throughout 1966. On 7 December 1966, the wing, with its component 446th, 447th, and 448th Strategic Missile Squadrons, became

fully operational with a complement of 150 Minuteman missiles.

As the first base to deploy Minuteman II missiles, Grand Forks AFB hosted "Project Long Life II," a unique reliability test in which modified Minuteman missiles were fueled to travel a few hundred yards. The first launch from a Grand Forks silo occurred on 19 October 1966 and was declared unsuccessful. Nine days later, a second attempt also failed. A third attempt under "Project Giant Boost" occurred in August 1968 and again proved unsuccessful.

First Minuteman II missile assigned in Aug 1965 and first squadron completely equipped in Apr 1966. Wing operational with 150 Minuteman missiles in Nov 1966.

From December 1971 to March 1973, the wing converted to Minuteman III missiles. These missiles represented a significant technological advancement, having multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs). Coordinating the missile changeover required complex planning and execution. In 1972 alone, 250 separate nuclear weapon convoys motored over the roads of North Dakota.

Modifications continued that enhanced readiness and improved survivability. For instance, about mid-August 1975, "Wing Six Integrated Program" (WSIP) was implemented. WSIP included a silo upgrade that improved the missile suspension system to withstand greater blast-shock and provided the 321st with a remote targeting capability.

The wing underwent continual readiness inspections and participated in numerous training exercises on base and at Vandenberg. Training improved with the expansion of on-base simulator facilities. For example, in 1970, wing crews conducted tests using "Modified Operational Missiles" which enabled them to exercise all aspects of a missile launch except igniting the engine.

In March 1995, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission selected the 321st Strategic Missile Wing for inactivation. The wing was downgraded to group status, and the 321st Missile Group was given a dual mission: To operate, maintain and secure combat-ready ICBM forces for the National Command Authority and to safely and securely transfer its alert responsibilities to the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana.

The most memorable event during 1997 for the base was weather related. The 1996-97 winter was particularly harsh even by North Dakotan standards. Record numbers of blizzards--six in all--dumped a corresponding record amount of snow, over 100 inches, on Grand Forks AFB and the surrounding communities, culminating in the spring with the worst flood in geographic dimensions in recorded history. Members, from both the 321 MG and 319 ARW, stationed at Grand Forks AFB were instrumental in protecting the city from rising waters and sheltering over 6000 victims when the rising river finally burst.

On 2 July 1998, the 321 MG inactivated. All the Minuteman III missiles were shipped to other locations and the silos placed in caretaker status. On 6 October 1999, the missile silos began to

be imploded as required by START.

When the decision was made to reduce the ICBM force, Grand Forks was placed on the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure list. While the base survived, the missile field and 321st did not. The 321st Missile Group inactivated on 30 September 1998.

The Air Force activated the 321st in August 2002 as the 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, assigned to AFCENT. The wing inactivated in 2004, but was activated again in 2008 to assume the mission of Iraq Training and Advisory Mission (ITAM)-Air Force.

The 321st AEW consists of four groups, geographically separated from wing headquarters:

321st Air Expeditionary Advisory Group (321 AEAG) Kirkuk AB

321st Expeditionary Mission Support Advisory Group (321 EMSAG) Tikrit,

407th Air Expeditionary Group (407 AEG) Ali Base

447th Air Expeditionary Group (447 AEG) Sather AB

Iraqi-Kuwaiti theater—Sixty-two airmen and 55 soldiers assigned to Camp Adder, known to the Iraqis as the Imam Ali Base, on the outskirts of Nasiriyah in southern Iraq, boarded a C-17 from Travis AFB, Calif., on Dec. 17 for a flight back to Kuwait. It was the last flight from the last US military base on the last night of Operation New Dawn, said Maj. Gen. Anthony Rock, 321st Air Expeditionary Wing commander, who flew from Kuwait back to Iraq to thank the troops for their service and make the historic flight back with them. The Daily Report was aboard for both legs. "This is a very historic night. I encourage all of you to look at the airmen to your left and to your right and shake their hands," said Maj. Gen. Russell Handy the senior Air Force leader in Iraq, who also made the flight back to greet the troops. Handy told the airmen to remember the hundreds of thousands who served before them and the 4,500 Americans who gave their lives in Iraq. "We buy a lot of equipment in the Air Force, but it's really all about the people. If there was ever an operation that was about the people, it's what we did here in Iraq. Thanks for your service and everything you've done," he said. Camp Adder transitioned back to the Iraqis on Dec. 16. 2011

The Air Force inactivated the 9th Air and Space Expeditionary Task Force-Iraq, along with the 321st Air Expeditionary Wing, 368th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group, and 467th Air Expeditionary Group Sunday afternoon local time. The ceremony took place in a hangar at an undisclosed installation here just five hours after the last US troops left Iraq. "It's been an honor to serve with so many men and women who poured their heart and soul into this mission," said Maj. Gen. Russell Handy who led the task force since August 2010. Handy also thanked airmen and their families for their "personal sacrifices." Nearly 4,500 US military members died during Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn and more than 32,000 were wounded. "Understandably, many of you will look back and wonder if it was worth the price. That question is one we all will have to ask ourselves because sacrifice is a deeply personal thing," said Handy. He assured each airman that they are leaving the Iraqis with more opportunities than they had before. "As you all depart here very soon, hold your heads high as proud members of a specialized fraternity of warriors," he said. 2011

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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