

## **432<sup>nd</sup> WING**



### **MISSION**

#### **LINEAGE**

432<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Wing established, 23 Mar 1953  
Activated, 8 Feb 1958  
Inactivated, 18 Jun 1959  
Activated, 19 Aug 1966  
Organized, 18 Sep 1966  
Redesignated 432<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, 15 Nov 1974  
Inactivated, 23 Dec 1975  
Redesignated 432<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Drone Group, 24 May 1976  
Activated, 1 Jul 1976  
Redesignated 432<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing  
Redesignated 432<sup>nd</sup> Wing

#### **STATIONS**

Shaw AFB, SC, 8 Feb 1958-18 Jun 1959  
Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, 18 Sep 1966-23 Dec 1975  
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 1 Jul 1976-1 Apr 1979  
Misawa AB, Japan  
Creech AFB, NV

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

837<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 8 Feb 1958-18 Jun 1959  
Pacific Air Forces, 19 Aug 1966  
Thirteenth Air Force, 18 Sep 1966  
17<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 1 Jul 1975-23 Dec 1975

Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jul 1976

**ATTACHMENTS**

Seventh Air Force, 18 Sep 1966-15 Aug 1973

United States Support Activities Group/Seventh Air Force, 15 Aug 1973-30 Jun 1975

**WEAPON SYSTEMS**

RF-84, 1958

RF-101, 1958-1959

RB-66, 1959

EB-66, 1966-1967

RF-101, 1966-1967

RF-4, 1966-1975

F-4, 1967-1975

RC-47, 1966-1969

AC-47, 1969-1970

AQM-34 (drone), 1976

DC-130, 1976

RC-130, 1976

CH-3, 1976

**COMMANDERS**

Col John G. Foster, 8 Feb 1958

Col Robert C. Rawl, 25 Aug 1958-18 Jun 1959

None (not manned), 19 Aug-17 Sep 1966

Col Robert W. Schick, 18 Sep 1966

Col Victor N. Cabas, 16 Sep 1967

Col Wendell L. Bevan, Jr., 3 Sep 1968

BG Darrell S. Cramer, 7 Jun 1969

Col David S. Mellish, 25 Feb 1970

Col Lloyd R. Leavitt, Jr., 26 Nov 1970

Col Lyle E. Mann, 3 Apr 1971

Col Charles A. Gabriel, 29 Oct 1971

Col Scott G. Smith, 14 Jun 1972

Col Robert W. Clement, 18 Mar 1973

Col William P. Acker, 15 Mar 1974

Col William D. Mol, 12 Mar-23 Dec 1975

Col Bennie E. Higgins, Jr., 1 Jul 1976

Col James E. Witzel, 10 Mar 1977

BG George W. Norwood, 1 Jun 1993-1 Oct 1994

**HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

Vietnam Air Offensive  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III  
Vietnam Air/Ground  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV  
TET 69/Counteroffensive  
Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969  
Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
Southwest Monsoon  
Commando Hunt V  
Commando Hunt VI  
Commando Hunt VII  
Vietnam Ceasefire

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Presidential Unit Citations (Southeast Asia)  
19 Sep 1967-1 Nov 1968  
1 Nov 1968-31 Oct 1969

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

18 Sep 1966-18 Sep 1967  
21 Nov 1969-20 Nov 1970  
21 Nov 1970-6 Apr 1971  
18 Dec 1972-27 Jan 1973

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

18 Sep 1966-28 Jan 1973

#### **EMBLEM**

Gules, a stylized owl holding in his dexter claw two lightning bolts in saltire, all Sable, details of the field, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "432D WING" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** 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 owl symbolizes the mission of the reconnaissance wing. According to legend, this wise bird possesses sharp vision both day and night. The lightning bolts symbolize the speed which is necessary for effective reconnaissance. (Approved, 432<sup>nd</sup> Group, 2 Jun 1955 and for 432<sup>nd</sup> Wing, 4 Aug 1958)

## **MOTTO**

VICTORIA PER SCI-ENTIAM—Victory through knowledge

## **OPERATIONS**

Replaced the 432d Tactical Reconnaissance Group in Feb 1958, assuming tactical reconnaissance mission. Operated USAF Advanced Flying Training School, Tactical Reconnaissance, Mar 1958-Jun 1959. Inactivated in Jun 1959. Organized in Southeast Asia in Sep 1966 to perform combat tactical reconnaissance. Added tactical fighter operations in Oct 1967, initially using fighters to provide combat air patrol and cover for unarmed reconnaissance planes, but later to fly strike missions. Wing fighter units destroyed many enemy aircraft: 36 confirmed aerial victories between 17 Dec 1967 and 8 Jan 1973.

Also used AC-47D gunships to provide air defense of friendly Laotian outposts, Jun 1969-Jun 1970. Ceased combat in Vietnam in Jan, in Laos in Feb, and in Cambodia in Aug 1973. The wing remained in Southeast Asia to perform reconnaissance and routine training to remain combat proficiency, changing designations from reconnaissance to fighter in Nov 1974. The wing supported the evacuation of U.S. personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 12 Apr 1975, and the evacuation of American and certain South Vietnamese personnel from Saigon on 29 Apr 1975. From 13 to 15 May 1975, the wing played a major role in locating the SS Mayaguez and in the military operations associated with the recovery of that American commercial vessel and its crew from the Cambodians.

The wing was relieved of all operational commitments on 30 Nov and inactivated at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, on 23 Dec 1975.

Organized as 432d Tactical Drone Group in Jul 1976 to perform photographic reconnaissance and to support tactical air and surface forces with tactical drones. Used AQM-34L/M/V drones, DC-130 launch vehicles, and CH-3 recovery helicopters. Conducted follow-on testing and evaluation of the AQM-34V model drone and initial operational testing and evaluation and developmental testing and evaluation of the DC-130H "mother ship." Supported testing and evaluation of the BQM-34C drone at Hill AFB, Utah.

The group was inactivated in April 1979, but was redesignated 432nd TFW and re-formed at Misawa AB in July 1984, with the F-16A assigned in April 1985. The wing upgraded to the F-16C/D in July 1986 and became the 432nd Fighter Wing mid-1991.

5/3/2007 The Air Force's first unmanned aircraft systems wing stood up 1 May at Creech AFB, NV. As Col Christopher Chambliss assumed command of the 432nd, a piece of history was revived and a course for the way ahead continued. "This is a monumental day for the Air Force," said Colonel Chambliss. "Having a wing dedicated to unmanned aircraft systems is a logical and important step in continuing the Air Force's role in being the world's greatest air and space power, and is equally critical to the Air Force's most important customers, the American warfighters."

The people of this wing have already proven themselves as key players in the war on

terrorism, said the colonel who came to Creech AFB from Mountain Home AFB, ID, where he was the 366th Fighter Wing vice commander. "It is a great honor to assume command of such a fine group of Airmen as a new chapter in the 432nd is opened," he said. The reactivation of this wing is a historic event, but it shouldn't be considered a starting point, the colonel said. Forming an unmanned aircraft systems wing has been in the work for about four years, according to Colonel Chambliss.

5/6/2008 Lt. Gen. Norman Seip, the 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern) commander, congratulated Airmen at Creech Air Force Base 6 May as the 432nd Wing marked its first year as the Air Force's only MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle wing. "The 432nd Wing has grown exponentially over the last year, in manpower, demand, flying hours, sorties, technology, reach, support for the warfighter and in battlefield capability," said General Seip. "From day one, the 432nd Wing Airmen have been 'all in' in the support of ongoing operations; particularly in operations Iraqi (Freedom) and Enduring Freedom."

The 432nd Wing comprises four operational squadrons, two formal training units and one maintenance squadron. The wing operates nine Reapers and 80 Predators, the most requested Air Force battlefield system in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, said Col. Christopher Chambliss, the 432nd Wing commander. "Our crews operate the most persistent strike, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform in the world," the colonel said. "Supporting our brothers on the ground 24 hours a day, 365 days a year is our primary mission.

These Airmen are operating on a wartime tempo despite being located within the United States." The MQ-1 and MQ-9 UAVs are used for strike, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, flown by pilots and sensor operators in the United States. Since 2001, the weapon systems have operated at "above max surge" levels, with 24 Predator combat air patrols and two Reaper CAPs - one U.S. and one United Kingdom - operating within the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility at all times.

The MQ-1, piloted by Creech-based crews, surpassed 250,000 flying hours on June 22, 2007, a feat 12 years in the making. Yet only six months later, the weapon system surpassed 300,000 flying hours. At the current rate, the Predator is likely to surpass 500,000 flying hours before the end of 2009. "It's a testament to our deployed maintainers, dedicated aircrews and support staff...enabling the Air Force to provide for the growing needs of the warfighter and generate combat sorties," said Colonel Chambliss. "As more commanders learn about the capabilities our systems provide, the more demand for our services continues to rise." In addition to sorties, manpower at the little-known unit has seen a steady rise since its inception.

More than 1,100 Airmen are currently assigned to the wing and its weapon systems in some capacity, with flight crews consisting of one pilot and one sensor operator. Twelve months ago, the unit counted 618 personnel assigned at the stand-up ceremony, a 78% increase. Despite the operations tempo, training for the future is a critical job at the 432nd Wing. Projections are for Predator missions to double by 2010, with Air Force aircrews and maintainers in short supply. To meet demand, the formal training units expanded from 40 aircrews trained per year to 160 per year. Next year, the FTUs are slated to train 240 aircrews.

"The Airmen in the 432nd Wg continue to grow and innovate to meet the needs of the warfighter today and in the future," said Colonel Chambliss. "With so many missions operated by our team each day, the past year's records are bound to be broken in the next. But the real

measure of effectiveness is that we have more than doubled the number of 24/7 CAPs we fly, providing persistent ISR and armed overwatch in Iraq and Afghanistan."

6/2/2008 The 432nd Wing here that flies the MQ-1 and MQ-9 was designated an air expeditionary wing by Air Combat Command officials in May. The wing will now have dual reporting responsibilities to 9th Air Force and U.S. Air Forces Central at Shaw Air Force Base, SC, as well as to 12th Air Force and U.S. Air Forces Southern at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ.

Members of the 432nd Wing's 15<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron first deployed Predators in support of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, respectively, in 2004. Since then, six additional combat squadrons, including four distributed Air National Guard units, have been activated. The 15th RS, later the 15th Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, had maintained operational control of the combat air patrols flown by these units.

The wing remains the Air Force's primary training installation for unmanned aircraft systems pilots, sensor operators and maintenance personnel. That mission will remain under the purview of officials from 12th Air Force (Air Forces Southern). "Our MQ-1 and MQ-9 crew training is the key enabler allowing us and our (Air Force Special Operations Command), British and Air National Guard partners to execute our combat mission," said Col. Chris Chambliss, the 432nd AEW commander.

"Standing up the AEW will not detract one bit from our training requirement." "The combination of three active duty and four Air National Guard units, as well as AFSOC and our British coalition partners, all executing daily combat missions in support of U.S. Central Command, had grown beyond the appropriate scope of the original mandate," Colonel Chambliss said. "Our Air Force leadership concluded that an expeditionary wing structure was needed to control these missions, synchronize efforts and be responsible to the 9th (Air Expeditionary Task Force) commander."

The wing's maintenance operations and organization will also be affected by the designation, Colonel Chambliss said. "There had never been a provision for command and control of continental United States maintenance support," Colonel Chambliss said. "While some maintainers have been deploying forward as attached expeditionary units that support launching and recovering MQ-1 and MQ-9 combat missions, many more remain here to maintain the equipment used to execute the (remote split operations) mission. These maintainers will now be directly aligned to our expeditionary mission."

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFNS) -- The 432nd Wing celebrated their 10th anniversary at Creech Air Force Base as a combat remotely piloted aircraft wing May 1, 2017. In attendance was Gen. Mike Holmes, the Air Combat Command commander, Col. Case Cunningham, the 432nd WG/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander, and 400 Airmen of the wing.

"Thanks for what you do," Holmes said. "What you've done with this aircraft, the 3 million flight hours since 2000 with 3,000 strikes in 2016 and 10 years at this base is what we're going to celebrate."

Before May 1, 2007, the Airmen flying and supporting MQ-1 and MQ-9 operations belonged to the 57th WG at Nellis AFB, Nevada. "As the focus and the mission grew, it became apparent that leaving it as a subset of another organization was no longer feasible," Cunningham said.

"We needed to have an organization that was dedicated to this mission set and that way of accomplishing airpower."

Former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael Moseley stated in a letter to the 432nd WG in 2007, "Let there be no doubt – the 432nd WG will be on the leading edge of our warfighting forces, whenever and wherever, we answer our nation's call. I expect the 432nd WG to continue to deliver lethal and non-lethal effects worldwide as a key component of the global vigilance, reach and power ... only America's Air Force can provide."

As the secretary of defense and joint forces commanders demanded more and more combat RPA capabilities, the wing experienced surging growth to continue providing critical airpower capabilities. In 2007, the wing flew just 12 combat lines a day and was scheduled to fly 21 by 2010. By 2012 the wing flew more than 50 lines a day. In 2014, the wing participated in 65 lines worldwide before settling to 60 combat lines in 2015.

"When you consider we were in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2007 heavily engaged on two battlefields, I think having an organization to support the Airmen on the ground was critical," Cunningham said. "Since then we've supported missions such as Operation Odyssey Lightning, Operation Freedom Sentinel and we continue to fly in Operation Inherent Resolve and others."

While supporting these engagements the wing has also hit milestones such as accomplishing one million flight hours in 2011, then quickly doubling to 2 million in 2013. Not only do the flight hours continue to keep rising, the number of weapons employments, do as well. Cunningham attributes this to the persistence, precision and professionalism of the wing's Airmen.

The wing is home to 11 flying squadrons, two operational groups and a maintenance group while also partnering with active-duty, Guard and Reserve units in 15 locations.

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 18 Nov 2010

Updated: 29 May 2012

#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.  
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.