

AIR FORCES PANAMA



MISSION

Southern Air Division (USAFSO), headquartered at Howard AFB, Panama, supports missions directed by the commander in chief, United States Southern Command (USCINCSO), and the commander, Tactical Air Command, in support of Air Force matters. Special USAFSO responsibilities include advising the commander in chief, United States Southern Command, on all matters affecting US and Latin American air forces; carrying out Air Force policies and executing missions with the unilateral structure prescribed by the commander, Tactical Air Command; and acting as the designated representative of the chief of staff, United States Air Force, to the Latin American air forces. The commander USAFSO also directs the activities of the 24th Composite Wing.

LINEAGE

USAF Southern Air Division established, 24 Nov 1975

Activated, 1 Jan 1976

Redesignated 830 Airlift Division, 1 Jan 1989

Redesignated Air Forces Panama, 15 Feb 1991

Inactivated, 11 Feb 1992

STATIONS

Albrook AFS, CZ, 1 Jan 1976

Howard AFB, CZ (later, Panama), 15 Aug 1977

Albrook AFS, Panama, 1 Mar 1989

Howard AFB, Panama, 15 Feb 1991-11 Feb 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

Tactical Air Command, 1 Jan 1976

Twelfth Air Force, 31 Jan 1987-11 Feb 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Rotational aircraft

A-7, 1976-1990

A-10, 1985-1988

C-130, 1976-1984

F-15, 1990-1992

F-16, 1990-1992

A-37, 1985-1992

O-2, 1976-1986

UH-1, 1976-1986

COMMANDERS

Maj Gen James M. Breedlove, 1 Jan 1976

Maj Gen Robert B. Tanguy, 6 Apr 1977

Brig Gen Thomas E. Wolters, 27 Jun 1980

Maj Gen William E. Masterson, 1 Feb 1981

Maj Gen Henry D. Canterbury, 13 Dec 1984

Col Harold E. Watson, 17 Jan 1987

Brig Gen Robin G. Tornow, 22 Jun 1988

Brig Gen David Oakes, 24 May 1990-11 Feb 1992

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Panama, 1989-1990

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

20 Dec 1989-14 Feb 1991

Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards

1 Feb 1981-31 Jan 1983

1 Jan 1986-31 Dec 1987

EMBLEM

Azure, issuing from base a demi-globe light blue gridlined argent below four rolled parchments arraswise of the second and of the third surmounted by a lightning bolt bend sinisterwise gules below four mullets of four points palewise one, two, and one or, all within a diminished bordure argent.

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The USAF Southern Airlift Division replaced the USAF Southern Air Command as the Air Force component of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Panama Canal Zone in Jan 1976. It assumed responsibility for the air defense of the Panama Canal and for USAF relations, including foreign military sales (FMS) and disaster relief assistance, with the Latin American nations. The division supported disaster relief to countries such as Guatemala, Jamaica, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Columbia. It also assisted Mexico in its purchase of F-5s and trained Mexican technicians in logistics and maintenance for the new aircraft. In 1984 the division, through the FMS program, delivered T-33s to Ecuador and A-37Bs to the Dominican Republic. The division participated annually in various training exercises, including paratroop drops and close air support for Army troops. It also conducted numerous combined exercises with various Latin American countries. Through the Inter-American Air Forces Academy, it provided technical training and education for airmen and officers from approximately 14 Latin American countries.

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