

# UNITED STATES AIR FORCES SOUTHERN COMMAND



## LINEAGE

Panama Canal Air Force established, 19 Oct 1940  
Activated as a major command, 20 Nov 1940  
Redesignated Caribbean Air Force, 5 Aug 1941  
Redesignated Sixth Air Force, 18 Sep 1942  
Redesignated Caribbean Air Command, 31 Jul 1946  
Redesignated United States Air Forces Southern Command, 8 Jul 1963  
Inactivated, 1 Jan 1976

## STATIONS

Albrook AFB, Panama

## COMMANDERS

MG Hubert R. Harmon, 31 Jul 1946  
BG Glen C. Jamison (acting), 4 Oct 1947  
MG Willis H. Hale, 13 Nov 1947  
BG Rosenham Beam, 20 Oct 1949  
BG Emil C. Kiel, 6 Nov 1950  
MG Reuben C. Hood, Jr., 11 Jun 1953  
MG Truman H. Landon, 20 Jun 1956  
MG Leland S. Stranathan, 3 Aug 1959  
MG Robert A. Breitweiser, 11 Sep 1963  
MG Reginald J. Clizbe, 6 Aug 1966  
MG Kenneth O. Sanborn, 14 June 1968  
MG Arthur G. Salisbury, 7 Apr 1972  
MG James M. Breedlove, Oct 1974

## EMBLEM

Sixth Air Force On a blue hexagon, a white star charged with a red disc partially over a pair of golden orange wings below a galleon in full sail, golden orange. (Approved, 16 Jul 1943)

## EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

## OPERATIONS

The primary mission of the Caribbean Air Command was to supervise and operate the extensive network of USAF Missions throughout Latin America. These Missions advised and assisted Latin American service personnel in US methods and procedures and assist in the standardization of military equipment in line with national needs and hemispheric defense requirements. The command's major responsibilities in this and allied areas placed it primarily in the field of military diplomacy. It possesses no combat units in its day-to-day organization.

Under the mission assigned by the Commander in Chief, Caribbean Command, CAC was charged with provision of air defense in the Caribbean Command area, maintenance of air traffic control within the Panama Air Traffic Control Area, conduct of search and rescue missions in the Panama area, support of the operations of Air Force units engaged in mapping and charting operations in Central and South America, and coordination with Army and Navy forces for joint exercises and operations.

On the diplomatic side, in addition to running the USAF Missions in Latin America, the Caribbean Air Command also provides logistics support to air attaches assigned to the capital cities of Latin America, operates the School for Latin America at Albrook, supplies airlift for the field headquarters of the Inter-American Geodetic Survey, and administers the Air Force phase of military assistance programs in Latin America.

The geographical area of responsibility assigned to the Caribbean Air Command by the Air Force comprises South and Central America south of Mexico. In spite of the size of its geographical area, the Caribbean Air Command is the smallest of the Air Force's major commands. It numbers fewer than 2,000 officers and men. The personnel are concentrated at Albrook, which is the one active base assigned to the command. Small detachments are also located in the capital cities of those countries in which a Military Mission or Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) is located.

The growth of the USAF Mission system throughout the southern continent is estimated to have received ninety percent of the command's attention during the past year. The Missions exist under the authority of formal executive agreements negotiated by the United States Department of State with the governments of the individual countries. Each agreement includes a statement of the purpose of the Mission, its authorized personnel strength, and the relationships between the Mission and its personnel and the host air force.

In general terms, the Missions are invited guests in the countries for the purpose of advising and assisting the host air forces in their development. As a consequence, Mission personnel attempt to assist their hosts in almost every phase of operations common to an air force organization, with the end objective that the host air forces will be able to perform their assigned missions within their national boundaries and will be in better position to participate in the over-all defense of the Western Hemisphere.

Because the duties and functions normally associated with a Military Assistance Advisory Group have been assigned to the USAF Missions in six countries where such groups are authorized, Mission personnel also administer the Grant Aid Program at the local level there.

In spite of the desires of Latin American governments, and willingness to study improved techniques and procedures on the part of individual Latin American airmen, the economic resources of many nations to the south will not permit the development of a modern air force with a high degree of combat readiness. The Mission must adjust its over-all objectives to the realities of these situations, and must endeavor to develop the type of air force best suited to the individual nation's needs and budget.

In order to achieve the objectives established for each Mission, USAF personnel must work in close association with their counterparts in the host air force. The attainment of good relations with the host air force depends partly upon the selection of personnel who are fully qualified in their specialty field and have a working knowledge of the host country and its language. Efforts to make friends are not confined to the working day but are extended to social occasions in which local civilians as well as members of the armed services take part.

As of June 30, 1959, the Caribbean Air Command was responsible for the operations of fourteen USAF Missions and an Air Force section of a joint commission. The USAF Missions were located in La Paz, Bolivia; Santiago, Chile; Bogotá, Colombia; Quito, Ecuador; San Salvador, El Salvador; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Port-au-Prince, Haiti; Tegucigalpa, Honduras; Managua, Nicaragua; Asuncion, Paraguay; Lima, Peru; Caracas, Venezuela; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Buenos Aires, Argentina. The joint commission was the Joint Brazil-United States Military Commission in Rio de Janeiro. During the past year, the USAF Mission to Cuba and the Military Assistance Advisory Group in the Dominican Republic were inactivated.

Less than twenty percent of the command's authorized military strength is assigned directly to duty with USAF Missions. The other personnel are stationed at Albrook in a support role. They supply direct assistance to the USAF Mission program in the areas of logistics, staff assistance in the functional areas of personnel, operations, and materiel, administration of the Military Assistance Program, and local training through the School for Latin America, USAF, at Albrook.

Activities under the Military Assistance Program included the procurement of Air Force equipment through the Grant Aid or the Reimbursable Aid Program, programming for zone-of-interior training for Latin American officers and men, and the procurement and installation of communications equipment in order to establish uniform communications systems and navigation aid throughout Latin America. The latter program is designed to benefit civil aviation as well as to benefit military aviation in the host countries.

The School for Latin America, USAF, provides instruction in seventeen technical fields and, during the past year, included among its student body representatives of some fourteen Latin American countries. The school provides an excellent means of support for the USAF Missions in that it furnishes technical training which is unavailable within the host country and which is required by the host air forces. The opportunity given for so many diverse nationalities to meet together, to understand each other, and to make friends is almost as important an achievement of the school as the instruction itself.



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Sources  
AFHRA

Air Force Magazine Almanacs. Air Force Association. Arlington, VA. Various years.