

## 27 SPECIAL OPERATIONS WING



### MISSION

The 27 Special Operations Wing (SOW) Develop, sustain and employ professional Air Commandos who execute specialized airpower and combat support to achieve the nation's security objectives.

The 27 SOW accomplishes global special operations taskings as an Air Force component member of the United States Special Operations Command. It conducts infiltration/exfiltration, combat support, tilt-rotor operations, helicopter aerial refueling, close air support, unmanned aerial vehicle operations, non-standard aviation, and other special missions. It directs the deployment, employment, training, and planning for squadrons that operate the AC-130W, MC-130J, CV-22B, C-146A, U-28A, MQ-9 and provides operational support to flying operations.

### LINEAGE

27 Fighter Wing, established, 28 Jul 1947  
Organized, 15 Aug 1947  
Redesignated 27 Fighter-Escort Wing, 1 Feb 1950  
Redesignated 27 Strategic Fighter Wing, 20 Jan 1953  
Redesignated 27 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 1 Jul 1957  
Redesignated 27 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1958  
Redesignated 27 Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1991  
Redesignated 27 Special Operations Wing, 1 Oct 2007

### STATIONS

Kearney AAFld (later, AFB), NE, 15 Aug 1947  
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 16 Mar 1949-18 Nov 1950  
Bergstrom AFB, TX, 16 Jul 1951-18 Feb 1959  
Cannon AFB, NM, 18 Feb 1959

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Taegu, South Korea, 1 Dec 1950-12 Dec 1950  
Misawa AB, Japan, 9 Oct 1952-20 Jan 1953

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Eighth Air Force, 15 Aug 1947  
42 Air Division, 6 Aug 1951  
Twelfth Air Force, 8 Jan 1958  
832 Air Division, 18 Feb 1959  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Jul 1975  
Eighth Air Force, 1 Jun 1992  
Twelfth Air Force, 1 Oct 2002

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Far East Air Forces, 19 Nov-29 Nov 1950  
Fifth Air Force, 30 Nov 1950-15 Jul 1951  
Far East Air Forces, 6-13 Oct 1952  
39 Air Division [Defense], 13 Oct 1952-c. 13 Feb 1953  
7 Air Division, 7 May-17 Aug 1955  
834 Air Division, 15 Jul 1958-18 Feb 1959  
3 Air Division [Provisional], 21 Oct-1 Dec 1962

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

P (later, F)-51, 1947-1949  
F-82, 1948-1950  
F-84, 1950-1951, 1951-1958  
F-84F  
KB-29, 1953-1955, 1955-1957  
F-101, 1957-1958  
F-100, 1959-1972  
T/AT-33, 1968-1973  
F-111, 1969-1970, 1970-1996  
EF-111, 1992-1998  
F-16, 1995  
MC-130, 2007  
PC-12, 2008  
AC-130, 2008  
M-28, 2008-2011  
Q-200, 2008-2010

MQ-9, 2009  
MQ-1, 2009  
CV-22, 2010  
Dornier 328, 2011  
C-145, 2012  
C-146, 2012

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Gwen G. Atkinson, 15 Aug 1947  
Col Ashley B. Packard, 7 Jan 1948  
Col Raymond F. Rudell, 1 May 1951  
Col Donald J. M. Blakeslee, 6 Jul 1952  
Col Richard N. Ellis, 2 Aug 1954  
Col Charles M. Walton Jr., Jul 1957  
Brig Gen Ivan W. McElroy, 8 Jan 1958  
Col John L. Gregory Jr., 15 Jul 1958-28 Jan 1959  
Unkn, 28 Jan-17 Feb 1959  
Col Gilbert L. Myers, 18 Feb 1959  
Col Arlie J. Blood, 10 May 1959  
Col Gilbert L. Meyers, 4 Aug 1959  
Col Thomas A. Robertson, 22 Aug 1959  
Col Arvis L. Hilpert, 12 Oct 1959  
Col Jack C. Berger, 17 Jul 1961  
Col Charles E. Simpson, 15 Jul 1963  
Col Dale S. Sweat, 15 Aug 1963  
Col Robert A. Tyler, 31 Dec 1965  
Col Herndon F. Williams, 25 May 1967  
Col Homer K. Hansen, 24 Jul 1967  
Col William L. Ford, 1 Apr 1968  
Col Jimmy J. Jumper, 16 Apr 1968  
Col Frank C. Buzze, 15 Jul 1968  
Col Charles E. Francis, 12 May 1970  
Col Richard E. Little, 28 Jan 1972  
Col John H. Bennett, 25 May 1973  
Col Cecil D. Crabb, 18 Jul 1975  
Col Thomas J. Hickey, 6 Aug 1976  
Brig Gen Joseph D. Moore, 18 Nov 1977  
Col Robert I. McCann, 7 May 1979  
Col William K. James, 5 Aug 1980  
Col Joseph K. Stapleton, 3 Sep 1982  
Col James E. Salminen, 11 May 1984  
Col Needham B. Jones, 7 Sep 1984  
Col Henry R. Becker, 29 Sep 1986  
Col Donald L. Peterson, 5 Jul 1988

Col Arnold L. Franklin, 14 Sep 1990  
Brig Gen Richard N. Goddard, 30 Jun 1992  
Col Lance L. Smith (interim), Jul 1993  
Brig Gen William H. Guth, 15 Sep 1993  
Col Michael J. Koerner, 6 Oct 1995  
Col David E. Clary, 8 Aug 1997  
Col Lloyd S. Utterback, 19 Jun 1999  
Col Jeffery A. Remington, 23 May 2000  
Col Robert E. Yates, 28 Mar 2002  
Col Tim Leahy, 1 Oct 2007  
Col Stephen A. Clark, 27 May 2009  
Col Albert M. Elton, II, 8 Jul 2011  
Col Tony D. Bauernfeind, Jul 2013  
Col Terence G. Taylor

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Korea  
CCF Intervention  
First UN Counteroffensive  
CCF Spring Offensive

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Meritorious Unit Awards  
1 Oct 2007-30 Sep 2009  
1 Oct 2009-30 Sep 2011

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
1 Jan 1981-30 Jun 1982  
1 Jan 1988-31 Dec 1989  
1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998  
1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation  
9 Nov 1950-31 May 1951

### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by the 27 Fighter Group prior to 28 Jul 1947

## Service Streamers

### Campaign Streamers

World War II

Philippine Islands

East Indies; Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

### Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Philippine Islands, 7 Dec 1941-[Apr] 1942

Philippine Islands, 8-22 Dec 1941

Philippine Islands, 6 Jan-8 Mar 1942

Italy, 10 Sep 1943

France, 4 Sep 1944

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

### EMBLEM



27 Fighter-Escort Wing patch



27 Tactical Fighter Wing patch



27 Tactical Fighter Wing patch



27 Fighter Wing patch



### 27 Special Operations Wing emblem

Per bend Azure and Or, in sinister chief a dexter hand clenched couped at the wrist; in dexter base a magnolia blossom, leave all Argent fimbriated and garnished Sable, all within a diminished bordure of the second. The colors of the shield, ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow, are the colors of the United States Air Force. The blue represents the sky and the yellow represents molten gold. The clenched fist indicates strength. The magnolia is the state flower of Louisiana, where the 27 Bombardment Group (Light) was first organized. (Approved for the 27 Group, 12 Se 1940, and for the 27 Wing on July 11, 1952)

### **MOTTO**

INTELLIGENT STRENGTH

### **OPERATIONS**

Fighter escort operations to meet Strategic Air Command commitments, 1947-1950.

Just prior to noon on November 9, 1950, a sudden flurry of hushed whispers swept through the headquarters building at Bergstrom Air Force Base. By noon, the whispers had died and a significant silence echoed the halls. There was an immediate meeting of staff officers. Then a conference of section officers. Finally a conference of non-coms. Typewriters pounded. Telephones rang. Mimeograph machines hummed with activity. Something big was in the making. Through the night the activity continued. Warehouse doors, usually closed to those without reams of paper work, seemed suddenly and miraculously opened. The hangar and the flight lines were flooded with improvised lighting facilities. Thunderjet engines roared through the darkness. Trailer trucks and forklifts swarmed about the base like ants around an anthill. The 27 Fighter-Escort Wing had been alerted for overseas. Effective date of deployment was less than 48 hours off, November 11. The F-84 Thunderjets were entering the United Nations' police action in Korea.

Pilots and crew chiefs of the 27 Fighter-Escort Group had been less than a week back from their second trans-Atlantic flight. In September and October, the Group had ferried a total of 180 Thunderjets to USAF units in Germany, flying the North Atlantic route. On the same day, the initial troop movements began. Maintenance personnel, Fighter Group crew chiefs, and a handful of support personnel were airlifted to San Diego, to accompany the pilots and Thunderjets on the overwater phase of the move. The first shipment of Thunderjets left California aboard the USS Bairoka just three days later, on November 14. On November 16, Colonel Ashley B. Packard and his staff left Bergstrom via air for the Far East. The balance of Wing Personnel was being moved daily by air from Bergstrom to Travis AF Base, California for air transportation to Japan. On the same day that Colonel Packard left, the second shipment of Thunderjets departed California aboard the USS Bataan. By November 27, the balance of the jet fighters was on the Pacific aboard the USS Cape Esperance.

Flying from California to Hickman AFB, Hawaii, to Wake Island, to Tokyo, about fifty percent of the Wing personnel were in Japan before the arrival of the Thunderjets. These airmen and officers were staged at Yokota AFB, a few miles outside Tokyo, where field equipment, winter clothing, and war supplies were issued. On November 25, the first 27 Fighter-Escort Wing personnel were airlifted to Kimpo AFB, Korea, and a few miles outside Seoul. The first Thunderjets arrived in Japan on November 30 at Yokasuka. They were unloaded by the Fighter-Group crew members and the 27's 4015th Organizational Maintenance Squadron personnel. The planes were moved from Yokasuka to Kizu-razu, to be readied for combat. The 27 was attached to the Fifth Air Force for operations upon arrival in the Far East. Fifth Air Force, on December 1, ruled that the Wing would be divided into two sections — an advanced echelon to operate from Korea, and a rear echelon to maintain the aircraft and administration in Japan.

These same orders designated the Korean phase of operations to be conducted from an airstrip at Taegu, Korea, necessitating a redeployment of personnel from Kimpo. Colonel Packard decided to remain with the advanced echelon, which consisted of the 27 Fighter-Escort Group and a minimum of support personnel. Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the deputy Wing Commander, was to take charge of the rear echelon. Rear echelon troops were moved from the staging area at Yokota AFB to Itazuke AFB, Japan, and immediate maintenance operations were



begun.

On December 5, Colonel Donald J. M. Blakeslee, then commanding the Fighter Group, led the first flight of Thunderjets from Itazuke AFB to Taegu. The next day, the Thunderjet pilots flew an indoctrination flight with fighter pilots of the 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing, also at Taegu at the time.

On Pearl Harbor Day — December 7 — the first Thunderjet operations began. A flight of four Thunderjets, led by Colonel Blakeslee, flew armed reconnaissance over enemy territory in the Chinnampo area on the west coast of Korea. Picking targets of opportunity, the flight dropped 32 5-inch rockets and expended 7200 rounds of 50-caliber ammunition strafing enemy positions, knocking out several enemy locomotives, a railroad marshalling yard, sinking a loaded barge in the vital shipping area near Chinnampo, and setting fire to three enemy-held villages.

In late January, after nearly two months of operations, Fifth Air Force moved the Thunderjets from Taegu to Itazuke, where the rear echelon maintenance program was operative. This move was the result of the long range effectiveness of the versatile Thunderjets. Taegu was a small airstrip, and there were a number of fighter units stationed there. The F-80 Shooting Stars, the World War II famous F-51s, and the aircraft of allied United Nations countries could not boast the long range of the Thunderjet. For that reason, the F-84s and the 27 Fighter-Escort Group moved once again.

The last missions from Taegu were flown on January 31. On the morning of February 1, operations began from Itazuke, and have continued from there until the arrival of the replacement, 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing. The 27 Fighter-Escort Wing flew 12,000 combat missions which totaled 25,000 combat hours.

The 27 was phased out of combat on July 1st. Some of the pilots continued to fly missions with the 136th Fighter-Bomber Wing which replaced the 27.

About September 1st the 27 was back at its home station at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, Texas.

Col Ashley B. Packard, the Wing Commander, was killed in the crash of a T-33, and Col Raymond F. Rudell assumed command of the 27 on 2 May 1951.

During its stay at Kearney, the 27 participated in "Operation Snow Bound" in the Nebraska area.

"Operation Haylift" was also conducted from the base to accomplish feeding of snowbound cattle from the air and dropping of supplies to stranded ranch houses.

In September and October 1950, the 27 Fighter-Escort Wing flew 180 F-84E fighters from Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, to Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Nicknamed Fox Able Three, this gigantic ferry mission was divided into two almost equal flights. The first contingent of 90 aircraft left Bergstrom on 15 September. One aircraft aborted the flight before the first leg was completed, but the other 89 fighters continued the mission, stopping five times en route for fuel. On 18 September, 84 fighters landed at Furstenfeldbruck, having covered approximately 5,858 miles in 16 hours and three minutes actual flying time. The other five fighters, held up for mechanical troubles at Keflavik, Iceland, landed in Germany on 19 September.

Airlifted back to Bergstrom by Military Air Transport Service aircraft, the 27's crews began getting ready for the second phase of Fox Able Three. On 15 October, 92 F-84s took off from Bergstrom, following the same route as the first flight. Bad weather hampered this phase of the flight, and it was not until 28 October that 91 fighters (one aircraft had trouble on the first leg and landed at Memphis, Tennessee) finally landed in Germany. Colonel Cy Wilson, the 27 commander, directed the two flights as task force commander, flying in the lead aircraft. For this flight, the 27 Wing received the Mackay Trophy for 1950. General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, USAF Chief of Staff, made the presentation to Colonel Raymond F. Rudell, the wing commander, at Bergstrom on 11 December 1951.

Deployed at Yokota AB, Japan, 19-30 Nov 1950, then split into two echelons, one at Taegu AB, South Korea, 1 Dec 1950-30 Jan 1951, and the other at Itazuke AB, Japan, 9 Dec 1950-31 Jan 1951. Flew combat in Korea, 6 Dec 1950-30 Jun 1951, including armed reconnaissance, interdiction, fighter escort, and close air support missions. The two echelons combined at Itazuke on 1 Feb 1951, continuing combat from that base. Provided close support for largest airborne operation of the Korean War and escorted B-29 bombers to the Yalu River in North Korea, coming into conflict with enemy MIG-15 fighters. Returned to the United States in Jul 1951 but deployed to provide air defense at Misawa AB, Japan, 6 Oct 1952-13 Feb 1953.

The 27 TFW assumed a new role on 1 January 1966, when its mission changed to training pilots and maintenance personnel for F-100 units. The role expanded with the arrival of T/AT-33 aircraft. With these new planes the wing trained Forward Air Controllers and Air Liaison Officers.

A brand new aircraft arrived in July 1969, loaned to the 27 from Nellis AFB, Nevada - 10 F-111As facilitated training while the wing awaited its own planes. F-111Es began arriving in October 1969, but their stay was short. In the summer of 1971, wing aircrews ferried the last of them to RAF Upper Heyford, United Kingdom. Finally, on 13 November 1971, the 27 TFW received the first of its F-111Ds.

In May 1977, the 27 TFW deployed a unit of D-models for the first time; operating from Robins AFB, Georgia, for three weeks. A year later, the 27 completed the first overseas deployment of

the F-111D, operating from Gardermoen Air Base, Norway, in support of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations.

During Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM the men and women of the 27 TFW played a role which was not what they envisioned. The aircrews and aircraft of the 27 did not deploy to the region. Instead, only support personnel and a combat support group element represented the wing. By the end of 1990, 241 people from Cannon AFB had deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD. On 16 January 1991, when the U.S.-led coalition force initiated an air assault against key Iraqi positions, the 27 TFW had 325 personnel serving in the Persian Gulf.

The 27 Fighter Wing retired its last F-111D and received its first F-111E and F models in December 1992. F-111F crews and support personnel from the 522nd, 523rd and 524th Fighter Squadrons (FS) began rotations in September 1992 to Incirlik AB, Turkey, in support of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. Their commitment ended in August 1993.

On 18 September 1998, the governments of Singapore and the United States signed an agreement laying the foundation of the Peace Carvin III. As a Foreign Military Sales program for the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF), Peace Carvin III was designed for the continued training of RSAF in rapid deployment and tactical employment of block 52 F-16C/D throughout a wide spectrum of missions including air-to-air, joint maritime and precision air-to-ground weapons delivery.

Following the model set by its predecessors in Vietnam, the wing once again did not deploy as a wing for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, but deployed squadrons.

On 1 October 2007, a new era began at Cannon AFB as the new Special Operations Wing activated as the 27 SOW.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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#### Sources

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*Bergstrom AFB: A History.* Bergstrom/Austin Community Council. 1993.