



55TH WING

History Pamphlet 2026

Relentless & Ready



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Emblem Data, Lineage, & Honors

3

Offutt Historical Timeline

4

Evolution of the Wing

5

Past & Current Leadership

6

Organizational Chart

9

Current Assigned Aircraft

10



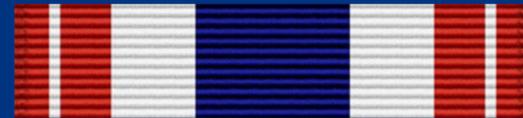
Lineage

- Designation:
- 29 June 1948 - Established as the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing
- 19 July 1948 - Activated
- 14 October 1949 - Inactivated
- 1 November 1950 - Reactivated as the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing
- 1 September 1991 - Redesignated as the 55th Wing
- Assignments:
- 19 July 1948 - 14 October 1949 311th Air Division
- 1 November 1950 Second Air Force
- 1 October 1952 21st Air Division
- 18 May - 16 August 1955 5th Air Division
- 1 September 1964 810th Strategic Aerospace Division
- 2 July 1966 12th Strategic Aerospace Division
- 30 June 1970 14th Strategic Aerospace Division
- 1 October 1976 4th Air Division
- 1 April 1980 57th Air Division
- 1 October 1982 12th Air Division
- 1 October 1985 14th Air Division
- 1 September 1991 2nd Air Force
- 1 July 1993 12th Air Force
- 1 October 2002 8th Air Force
- 1 October 2009 12th Air Force
- 1 October 2014 25th Air Force
- 11 October 2019 - Present 16th Air Force

Stations:

- 19 July 1948 - 14 October 1949 Topeka Air Force Base, Kansas
- 1 November 1950 Ramey Air Force Base, Puerto Rico
- 5 October 1952 Forbes Air Force Base, Kansas
- 16 August 1966 - Present

Honors



Meritorious Unit Award

- 3 February - 31 May 2004
- 1 June 2004 - 31 May 2006
- 1 June 2006 - 31 May 2007
- 1 June 2007 - 31 May 2008
- 2 June 2008 - 31 May 2009
- 1 June 2009 - 32 May 2010
- 1 June 2012 - 31 May 2014
- 1 June 2014 - 31 May 2015
- 1 June 2016 - 31 May 2017
- 1 June 2018 - 31 May 2019
- 1 June 2019 - 31 May 2020
- 1 June 2020 - 31 May 2021
- 1 June 2023 - 31 May 2024



Air & Space Outstanding Unit Award

- 1 July 1956 - 1 November 1957
- 1 July 1963 - 30 June 1964
- 1 July 1966 - 30 June 1964
- 1 July 1972 - 30 June 1974
- 1 July 1974 - 30 June 1976
- 1 July 1976 - 30 June 1978
- 1 July 1978 - 30 June 1980
- 1 July 1987 - 30 June 1989
- 1 July 1989 - 30 June 1991
- 1 August 1993 - 31 July 1995
- 1 June 1997 - 31 May 2001
- 1 January 2009 - 31 December 2010
- 1 June 2011 - 31 May 2012
- 1 June 2015 - 31 May 2016
- 1 June 2017 - 32 May 2018
- 1 June 2022 - 31 May 2023

Emblem Significance

Blue and 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 wavy lines represent the Columbia River and Portland Air Base, origin of the 55th Wing.

Emblems



55th Pursuit Group
January 1941 - August 1946



55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing
November 1950 - September 1991



55th Wing September 1991 - Present

OFFUTT HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1890



Established in 1890 on 545 acres south of Omaha, the U.S. War Department created a new Army post named for the legendary General George Crook. Its original mission was to help maintain peace between the settlers of the Nebraska Territory and the local Native American tribes.

1918



The arrival of the 61st Balloon Company on September 10, 1918, as the installation's first air unit, marked its pivotal transition into an active airfield. This event established a legacy of aerial reconnaissance that originated in World War I and endures today.

1924



An Omaha native and the city's first air casualty of World War I, 1st Lt. Jarvis Offutt tragically died during a training flight over France in 1918 during his first day on the job with the Royal Air Force's 56 Squadron. In his honor, the Fort Crook flying field was dedicated as Offutt Field on May 10, 1924.

1940



In 1940, the Glenn L. Martin Company built an aircraft assembly plant at Offutt Field, producing thousands of bombers, including the B-29s Enola Gay and Bockscar. The facility used to modify these historic aircraft for atomic missions is now the Offutt Field House (pictured), the largest fitness center in the Air Force.

1948

Following the National Security Act of 1947, which created the Department of the Air Force, the new service took control of Fort Crook and renamed it Offutt Air Force Base on January 13, 1948.

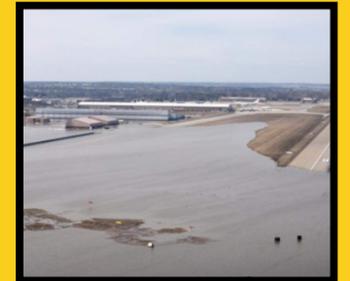
On November 9, 1948, Strategic Air Command (SAC) moved its headquarters from Andrews Field, Maryland, to Offutt Air Force Base to better position its long-range strike force in a central U.S. location.

1991



As part of a post-Cold War reorganization in 1992, the U.S. Air Force inactivated Strategic Air Command (SAC). The Air Force then redistributed SAC's assets among several commands and transferred its headquarters at Offutt AFB to the newly formed U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM).

2019



A devastating March 2019 flood at Offutt caused millions in damages, displaced over 3,200 personnel, and forced an 18-month operational move to the Nebraska Air National Guard base in Lincoln for runway reconstruction in 2021.

55TH PURSUIT GROUP

The 55th Pursuit Group (established November 1940) activated in January 1941 and was redesignated as the 55th Fighter Group in May 1942. Deploying to England in 1943, the group—composed of the 38th, 338th, and 343rd Fighter Squadrons—became the first operational P-38 unit in the European theater. Its primary mission was escorting 8th Air Force bombers.

Throughout 600 combat missions, the 55th Fighter Group destroyed over 400 enemy aircraft and earned a distinguished record before its inactivation in 1946. Today, its legacy continues as the 55th Operations Group. This group, which still includes the 38th, 338th, and 343rd squadrons, is now the largest and most diverse operations group in the Air Force.



Photograph: RB-47 crew from the 55th SRW, unknown date

55TH STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE WING

Activating on November 1, 1950, the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (55 SRW) quickly transitioned into the jet age, adopting the RB-47 "Stratojet" in 1954 to conduct global electronic, weather, and photographic reconnaissance missions. The wing's strategic importance was demonstrated during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, where it provided critical intelligence.

In 1966, the wing relocated to Offutt AFB, Nebraska, where it assumed the vital "Looking Glass" airborne command post mission and began converting to its signature RC-135 airframe. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the wing continuously evolved, integrating specialized platforms like the RC-135V Rivet Joint and taking responsibility for the E-4 National Emergency Airborne Command Post (now known as the National Airborne Operations Center or NAOC). While maintaining its global reconnaissance posture against Cold War threats, the wing also proved essential in regional contingencies, supporting operations in Grenada, Libya, and Panama.

With the start of the 1990s, the 55th was one of the first units deployed for Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, flying over 600 sorties. This set the precedent for its continued, high-tempo support to numerous U.S. contingency operations around the world.

55TH WING

Following the establishment of Air Combat Command, the Air Force redesignated the unit as the 55th Wing on October 1, 1991. Throughout the 1990s, the wing's responsibilities grew significantly as it supported no-fly zone enforcement over Iraq and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Its mission diversified further when it began supporting FEMA's domestic disaster response in 1994 and operating the OC-135B "Open Skies" treaty aircraft in 1996.

The wing's portfolio continued to expand into the new millennium. In 2003, the 55th Electronic Combat Group and its EC-130H Compass Call aircraft at Davis-Monthan AFB were assigned to the wing. This sustained growth has forged the 55th Wing into ACC's largest wing, composed of six groups and 31 squadrons.

It now hosts over 50 mission partners, including USSTRATCOM, 557th Weather Wing, and the 95th Wing, solidifying its role as a cornerstone of global airpower.



Photograph: Strategic Air Command, Bldg 500, prior to 1978. Now current home of the 55th Wing.

CURRENT LEADERSHIP



COMMANDER

Col Aaron Gray

17 June 2025-Present



COMMAND CHIEF

CMSgt Andrew Small

23 July 2024-Present

PAST LEADERSHIP

55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Commanders

Col Alfred Kalberer
July 1948- October 1948

Col William Yancey
October 1948-August 1949

Col John Davies
August 1949 - November 1951

Col Richard King
November 1950 - December 1950

Brig Gen Sydney Grubbs Jr.
December 1950 - February 1952

Col Alfred Kalberer
February 1952 - October 1952

Brig Gen Joseph Caldara
October 1952 - December 1952

Col Clayton Stiles
December 1952 - January 1953

Col Adam Breckenridge
January 1953 - May 1955

Col Olbert Lassiter
May 1955 - February 1957

Col James Johnson
February 1957 - August 1959

Col Norton Van Sicklen
August 1959 - July 1960

Col Kyle William Jr.
July 1960 - June 1961

Col John Glover
June 1961 - June 1963

Col Marion Mixon
June 1963 - August 1966

Col William Riggs
August 1966 - July 1970

Col Anthony Martinez
July 1970 - June 1971

Col Marvin Morss
June 1971 - August 1972

Col George Miller
August 1972 - July 1974

Col Joe Church
July 1974 - March 1976

Col Guy Winstead Jr.
March 1976 - May 1978

Brig Gen Regis Urschler
May 1978 - August 1980

Col Donald Krause
August 1980 - March 1982

Col John Soper
May 1982 - October 1982

Col Merlin Stevens
November 1982 - October 1984

Col Mark Heller
October 1984 - June 1985

Col Richer Vara
June 1985 - June 1986

Col Lawrence Mitchell
June 1986 - May 1988

Col Daniel Peterson
May 1988 - June 1990

Col Thomas Atkinson Jr.
June 1990 - July 1991

PAST LEADERSHIP

55th Wing Commanders

Col William Manire
July 1991 - May 1993

Brig Gen Thomas Keck
May 1993 - May 1995

Brig Gen Michael Kudlacz
May 1995 - December 1998

Brig Gen Gary Ambrose
December 1996 - November 1998

Brig Gen Ronald Sams
November 1998 - February 2000

Brig Gen Gregory Power
February 2000 - August 2002

Brig Gen T.C. Jones
August 2002 - October 2003

Brig Gen John Koziol
October 2003 - September 2005

Col Jonathan George
September 2005 - March 2007

Col James Jones
March 2007 - April 2009

Col John Shanahan
April 2009 - March 2011

Col Donald Bacon
March 2011 - June 2012

Col John Rauch
June 2012 - June 2013

Col Gregory Guillot
June 2013 - June 2015

Col George Reynolds
June 2015 - June 2015

Col Michael Manion
June 2017 - June 2019

Col Gavin Marks
June 2019 - June 2021

Col Kristen Thompson
June 2021 - June 2023

Col Mark Howard
June 2023 - June 2025

55th Wing Command Chiefs

CMSgt Richard Casey
July 1998 - February 2000

CMSgt Vicki Swingle
February 2000 - July 2004

CMSgt Robert Muthard
July 2004 - May 2006

CMSgt Kenneth Funderburg
May 2006 - September 2008

CMSgt Lisa Sirois
October 2008 - July 2010

CMSgt Suzan Sangster
July 2010 - April 2012

CMSgt William Thomaston
April 2012 - May 2014

CMSgt Matthew Grengs
May 2014 - June 2015

CMSgt Michael Morris
June 2015 - August 2017

CMSgt Brian Kruzelnick
August 2017 - December 2018

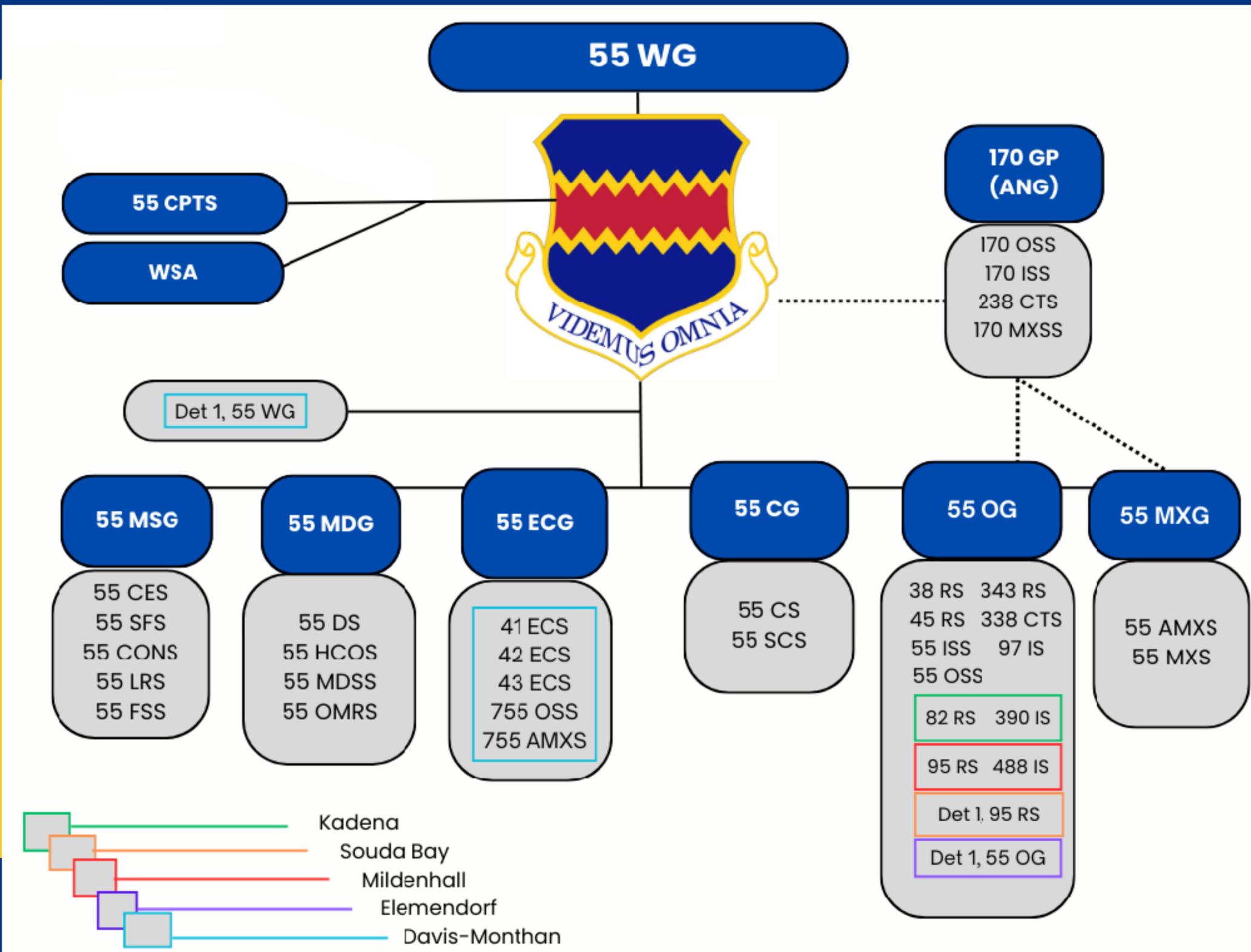
CMSgt Brian Thomas
February 2019 - November 2020

CMSgt Bryan Tuman
November 2020 - August 2022

CMSgt Melissa Royster
August 2022 - July 2024



Current Wing Structure Including Geographically Separated Units





Current Assigned Aircraft



RC-135V/W Rivet Joint



EC-130H Compass Call



RC-135U Combat Sent



WC-135 Constant Phoenix



EA-37B Compass Call



RC-135S Cobra Ball



★ Brought to you by the 55 WG History Office ★
Special thanks to
MSgt Brianne Drouncheck