

*At a Glance: The Heritage of the  
97th Air Mobility Wing  
and  
Altus Air Force Base*



## **A Bilateral History**

Both Altus Air Force Base and the 97th Air Mobility Wing have impressive and distinct histories which do not join until 1 October 1992. This heritage pamphlet is not intended to cover the entire 70 plus year history of each but a snippet of their joint service to the United States Air Force and our great nation. Detailed information of the former commanders, aircraft, missions and accomplishments can be found at the Altus AFB website.

<http://www.altus.af.mil/units/index.asp>



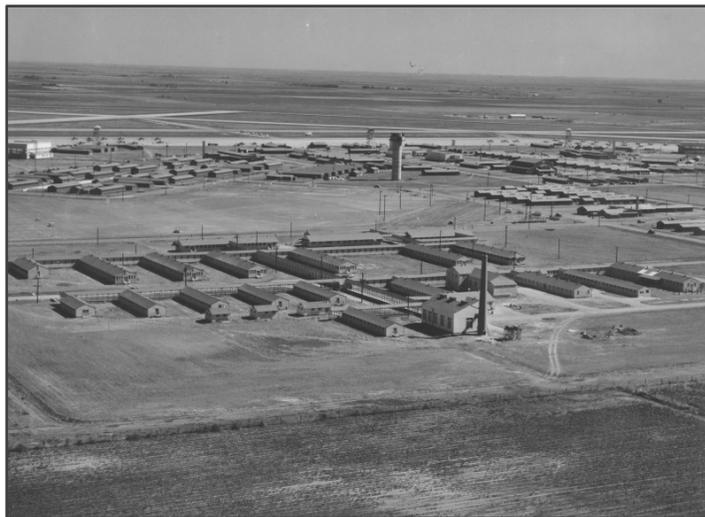
## Emblem

Azure, a spear, flammant proper palewise point to base Or, garnished Tenne' (Golden Orange), highlighted Argent shaded Azure; spear tip embued Gules, all within a diminished bordure Or. *Motto*: VENIT HORA—The hour has come. Approved for 97th Group on 5 Mar 1943 and, in modified form, for 97th Wing on 2 May 1957 (K 7777).

Information obtained from the Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

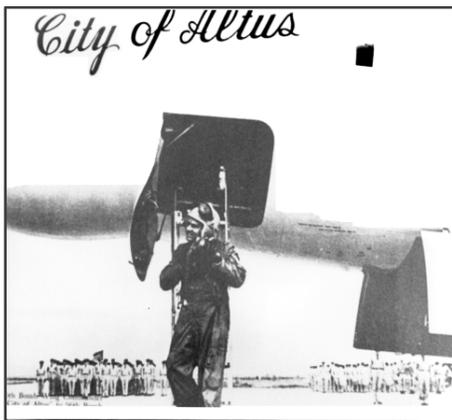
## The History of Altus Air Force Base, 1943-Present

Born out of the cotton fields of southwestern Oklahoma, Altus Air Force Base first became home to military aircraft and personnel in 1943. With an average of over 300 days of weather favorable to flying each year, a generally flat landscape and few obstructions, the base was then and is still, ideally situated to be a perfect location for young airmen to hone their skills. Originally called Altus Army Air Field (AAF), construction of the new base began in May 1942. Over the next five decades, the base evolved to become the premier air mobility training location in the United States Air Force (USAF).



The base became operational on January 1943, training new pilots on multi-engine aircraft. The primary training aircraft were the Cessna AT-17 *Bobcat* and the Curtiss-Wright AT-9 *Jeep*. After the students perfected their skills with these aircraft, they transferred to units that would prepare them to fly the actual type of aircraft they would use in combat over Europe and in the Pacific theaters during WW II. At the end of hostilities in Europe, Altus AAF was slated for inactivation and on 15 May 1945 placed on temporary inactive status.

The base would only sit idle for a few years. The onset of the Korean War in June 1950



created the need for more men to fly and service aircraft. During the early years of the conflict, many WWII airfields were examined for reactivation. On 1 August 1953, Altus Air Force Base reactivated as a training base for transport aircraft. The durable C-47 *Skytrain* and the feisty C-45 *Expediter* were the main aircraft assigned to the base, run briefly by the 63d Troop Carrier Wing from 8 January until 15 October 1953 under the

watch of the Tactical Air Command. During the 1950s, the base would undergo many changes in the new and maturing Air Force. Later that same year, 18 November, the 96th Bombardment Wing, (96 BW) Medium arrived and began operations under Strategic Air Command with three

squadrons of bombers and one air refueling squadron. These squadrons eventually flew the first all jet-engine bomber, the B-47 *Stratojet* and the KC-97 *Stratofreighter*, a dual-purpose cargo and air refueling aircraft. By the end of the decade both of these aircraft would be replaced by aircraft still in the Air Force inventory, the KC-135 *Stratotanker* and the B-52 *Stratofortress*. The KC-135 is the first all jet engine air refueling aircraft and the B-52 remains the backbone of the bomber fleet. When the 96 BW moved to Dyess AFB Texas the 11th Bombardment Wing, Heavy, activated and stood countless hours on alert during the Cold War with this formidable duo. As the base moved into the 1960s, more changes would occur.

In June 1961, the personnel on the base witnessed the activation of twelve Atlas “F” intercontinental ballistic missile sites within a 40-mile radius of the base. Controlled by the 577th Missile Squadron, the missiles sat inside a silo, constructed underground with a launch facility, manned around the clock. The missile silos became operational on 10 October 1962 but the activation would be short lived.

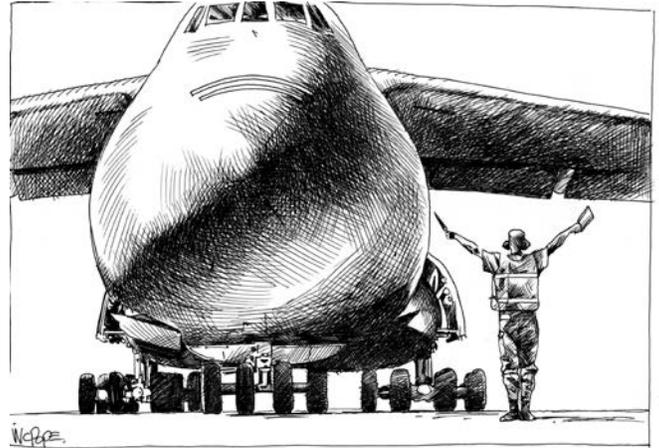
By April 1965, the Atlas missile would be outdated and was phased out of the national strategic defense plan. However, a bigger plan was on the horizon for the base.

In August 1966, the 4th Mobile Communications Group transferred from Hunter AFB, Georgia to Altus. The unit’s mission consisted of providing mobile and transportable communication services, aids to navigation and air traffic control for use in any area of the world. The arrival of this 800-person unit and their families also offset the impact the local community experienced with the loss of the missile squadron and B-52 mission.

#### **“How a Brown Paper Sack Saved a City”**

In the early 1960s a local businessman, Mr. Dick Moore and some friends had raised some campaign money for then Vice President Johnson and met with him at an event in Oklahoma City. After handing him the money in a brown paper sack, Johnson thanked him and told him if you ever need anything just use the words “before the cock crows twice.” So when it looked like Altus was going to lose a large population of the base for at least 4 years, Mr. Moore went to Washington. When he got there, he asked to see the President. When asked if he had an appointment he told the guard, I would like see him “before the cock crows twice.” Within 20 minutes, Mr. Moore was in the oval office explaining the situation at Altus. After listening, President Johnson called Robert McNamara, the Secretary of Defense and asked him to divert the unit going from Georgia to California to Altus. The unit was the 800 personnel strong, 4th Mobile Communications Group.

Then 1967 the Air Force searched for a base that could handle the training for its most versatile transport or cargo aircraft, the C-141 *Starlifter* and its newest and largest transport aircraft, the enormous C-5 *Galaxy*. Again, the clear skies and wide expanses of land native to Oklahoma proved to be best suited for the mission.



At the end of the search, the Military Airlift Command assumed control of the base and activated the 443d Military Airlift Wing, Training, to fly alongside the SAC aircraft now a tenant of the base. By the start of the 1970s, Altus AFB would have three aircraft assigned, the KC-135, the C-141, and the C-5. On 1 October 1984, the 11th Bombardment Wing transferred to Bolling AFB, Washington D.C. To man the KC-135s under SACs control, the USAF activated 340th Air Refueling Wing. Through the 1980s and 1990s, these three aircraft would be as common a sight in the skies above southwestern Oklahoma as the local sparrows, meadowlarks, hawks, quail and the state bird, the scissor-tailed flycatcher.

The end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century would see many changes for the base. First, on 1 June 1992, the Air Force reorganized and the Military Airlift Command became the Air Mobility Command (AMC). Second, the 443d Airlift Wing and the 340th Air Refueling Wing were inactivated and on 1 October the first Air Mobility Wing (AMW), the 97th arrived. Then on 1 July 1993, the 97 AMW transferred from AMC to the new Air Education and Training Command. This change also switched the role of the KC-135 crews from active alert to instructors of all crew positions in the *Stratotanker*.



However, more changes were on the horizon. In 1996, the latest addition to Altus AFB, the agile C-17 *Globemaster III*, arrived. This “hot rod of the heavies,” with a unique winglet, an expansive cargo area, and powerful engines, is the newest cargo aircraft in the Air Force. Even before its arrival, the base began training pilots and loadmasters to operate and fly the

aircraft designed for use as an intermediate short airfield cargo aircraft. Then, on 28 July 2001, the base witnessed the retirement of an old friend. After 32 years at Altus AFB, the C-141, piloted by the men and women of the 57th Airlift Squadron was released from active duty and transferred to the capable hands of the USAF Reserve.

In August 2002, the Wing reorganized as a "combat wing." The 97th Support Group became the Mission Support Group, gaining the new 97th Logistics Readiness Squadron (comprised of the former 97th Supply and Transportation Squadrons and logistics plans flight) and the 97th Contracting Squadron. Also, the Logistics Group inactivated and the 97th Maintenance Directorate was activated. This directorate is comprised of civil service personnel who are responsible for the care and maintenance of all three aircraft at the base. In 2005, the wing completed the expansion of the Sooner Drop Zone. This allows the students receive hands on training on the dual-row airdrop delivery capability of the C-17 *Loadmaster III*.



Utilization of this feature doubles the amount of equipment, personnel, and supplies that the C-17 aircrews can bring directly into the combat theater of operations. Also, the wing began training the C-17 aircrews on the use of night vision goggles providing the crews with increased survivability during low-light operations in high threat environments.

The most recent historic moment at Altus AFB occurred on June 29, 2007, when the wing held the fly-away ceremony for the C-5 Galaxy ending a prestigious 38-year stint. Since the stand-up of the schoolhouse in 1969, and the arrival of the first Galaxy on Dec. 17 of the same year, every aircrew member trained on the Mighty C-5 passed through the 56th Airlift Squadron and the Southwestern skies of Oklahoma. Now, in the 21st century, Altus AFB continues to perform the basic mission it started in 1943, providing a safe, comfortable location to train military personnel on the intricacies of operating multi-engine aircraft.



In 2012, Altus AFB gained a new addition under its wing--the 730th Air Mobility Training Squadron. The 730th re-activated as a member of Altus AFB's total force initiative between the active-duty 97th AMW and the 507th Air Refueling Wing of the Air Force Reserve Command. This group of "citizen Airmen" work side-by-side with active-duty

Airmen in the 97th AMW, training C-17 Globemaster III and KC-135 Stratotanker aircrew members. The new association was intended to increase global mobility and engagement options in support of peacetime and combat operations, forging combat mobility forces and deploying Airman Warriors.

Activated in 1943 during World War II, the 730th has performed a variety of missions - from bombardment to night photo and tactical reconnaissance; to troop carrier, tactical and military airlift in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War. The unit first saw reserve duty when activated in the reserve on Aug. 1, 1947. On Mar. 25, 1968, the 730th Military Airlift Squadron became the first associate reserve unit, which is when a reserve unit shares facilities and aircraft with an active-duty unit. It was re-designated the 730th Airlift Squadron (associate) on Feb. 1, 1992 and then deactivated on March 19, 2005. The 730th has flown a multitude of aircraft including the B-17 Flying Fortress, T-6 Texan, T-7 Navigator, T-11 Kansan, B-26 Marauder, F-51 Mustang, C-46 Commando, C-119 Flying Boxcar, C-141 Starlifter and now the C-17 and KC-135.

Despite the 97th Air Mobility Wing's primary mission of training airlift and air refueling crews, the wing has deployed its members to support a number of worldwide contingencies, such as Operations; NORTHERN WATCH, DESERT STORM, DESERT FOX, ALLIED FORCE, JOINT GUARD, ENDURING FREEDOM, NOBLE EAGLE and IRAQI FREEDOM. Additionally, the wing has supported relief operations following hurricanes; Katrina, Rita, Wilma, in 2005, and Gustav and Ike in 2008. In January 2010, just a few days after a catastrophic earthquake devastated the Caribbean nation of Haiti, aircrew and maintenance personnel flew 97th Air Mobility Wing C-17s to the East Coast in support of earthquake recovery operations and delivered much needed relief supplies and evacuated injured and

elderly Haitians to relief hospitals in the region. In the years following the earthquake, the wing continued to support the relief effort through airlift and manpower in conjunction with the Denton Amendment. The Mighty 97th also supported North Atlantic Treaty Organization efforts to augment Turkey's self-defense capabilities by leveraging the deployment of two Patriot Missile Batteries from the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. As the aerial port of debarkation, the wing supported the movement of 365 troops, 1,100 tons of equipment and supplies over a six day period.



97 AMW personnel load humanitarian supplies on a C-17 bound for Haiti.

The continued dedication and expertise of the personnel assigned to the 97th Air Mobility Wing earned Altus AFB the 2014 Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence. Following this announcement, clear skies and wide expanses of land once again proved to be ideal for transport and cargo aircraft training, as Air Force officials announced April 23, 2014, that Altus AFB is the Air Force's KC-46A *Pegasus* formal training unit. Altus AFB will begin receiving aircraft in fiscal year 2016, and will activate the 56th Air Refueling Squadron (formally the 56th Airlift Squadron which flew the C-5 at Altus AFB for 38 years). The squadron will consist of up to eight KC-46A aircraft with a mission to train personnel to safely and effectively fly and operate the KC-46A aircraft. The KC-46A aircraft will replace a portion of the aging KC-135 fleet which has been the USAF's primary refueling



aircraft for more than 50 years. The KC-46A will provide improved capability, including boom and drogue refueling on the same sortie, world-wide navigation and communication, airlift capability on the entire main deck floor, receiver air refueling, improved force protection and survivability, and multi-point air refueling capability.

As the base moves into the twenty-first century it continues to perform the basic mission it started in 1943, providing a safe, comfortable location to train military personnel on the intricacies of operating multi-engine aircraft.

Compiled and written by: Richard S. Guinan, 97th Air Mobility Wing Historian

## A Bulleted History of the Mighty 97th



- Established as the 97th Bombardment Group (Heavy) on 28 January 1942 and activated 6 days later at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida the group quickly moved down the coast to Sarasota, Florida to begin training and flying antisubmarine patrols in the largest bomber of the day, the B-17 *Flying Fortress*. The exploits of 97th led to their selection as the first American B-17 heavy bomber to operate out of Polebrook, England putting the “might” in the Mighty Eight Air Force.
- From that first, the group went to many firsts for the Army Air Forces and heavy bombing, first to bomb occupied Europe, 17 Aug 1942, Rouen, France, first to land in North Africa, first to bomb Germany from Africa, first to Rome, and first to fly 300 missions among others. After bombing the shores of Italy prior to the Army’s landing, the 97th became the first to fly “shuttle” missions in to Russia. The bombers would take off from Italy, bomb the Nazis fighting the Russians land, reload and bomb them again on their return to Italy.
- The war years were not easy for the Mighty 97th, in the beginning a B-17 crew only had a 25% chance of returning from a bombing mission. With the help of some the Air Forces founding fathers, General Hap Arnold, General Ira Eaker, and future Generals, Jimmy Doolittle, Frank Armstrong and Curtis LeMay the bombing formations and tactics provided a better survival rate and more accurate bombing.
- One notable commander of the 97th, was Col Jacob E. Smart, during the height of the war he transferred to the 97th from the staff of General Arnold where he had been involved in planning the Allied invasion of Europe, later know as D-Day. On his 29th mission, his B-17 exploded and he was thrown clear only to be captured by the Germans. Once the enemy realized he was the architect of the low level raid on the prized oilfields of Ploiești, Romania and would now of greater secrets they never succeeded in gaining any information from him. He was freed from the prisoner of war camp by none other than General George Patton.
- During World War II the men of Mighty 97th associated with several key leaders:
  - President Franklin D. Roosevelt - 1933 - 1945
  - Sir Winston Churchill - Prime Minister of the United Kingdom 1940-45
  - General Dwight D. Eisenhower - Supreme Allied Commander
  - General Henry “Hap” Arnold - Commanding General of the USAAF
  - General Ira Eaker - Commander of the Eighth Air Force 1941-1947

- General James Doolittle - led the first bombing on Tokyo from the USS Hornet and later commanded the Twelfth and Fifteenth Air Forces at the same time as the 97th Bomb Group.
- Brig Gen Frank Armstrong - led the first and last heavy bombing missions of WWII and profiled in the movie “Twelve O’clock High”
- Brig General Paul Tibbets - lead pilot on the first heavy bombing mission and flew the Enola Gay over Hiroshima to drop the first atomic bomb



### **United States Air Force - Strategic Wing**

- Just before the official activation of the USAF the 97th Bombardment Wing, Medium inherited the WWII lineage and honors of the 97th Group on 11 September 1947 and activated and Mile 26 Air Field (later Eielson AFB, Alaska) on 1 December 1947. Within a year, the wing moved to Smoky Hill AFB, Kansas then settled in at Biggs AFB, Texas on 22 May 1948.
- While at Biggs AFB, the wing helped develop the new American style flying boom for air-to-air refueling using B-29 and B-50 bombers converted to tanker models.
- Later the wing added bombardment training mission, first with the B-47 and then with the B-52 *Stratofortress*, then electronic reconnaissance missions in April 1954. During this period, the wing also deployed to England and Guam on separate occasions.
- In 1959, the wing moved to Blytheville (later, Eaker) AFB, Arkansas with KC-135 and B-52 aircraft. The wing supported the build-up for the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and in the late 1960s and 1970s supported the combat bombing and aerial refueling missions in Vietnam. Crews from the Mighty 97th led B-52 Linebacker I and II missions. Tanker crews supported the rescue of American citizens in Grenada in 1983. During Operation Desert Shield, the 97th deployed KC-135 crews and maintenance personnel to support the transport of 500,000 personnel to Southwest Asia. Then, provided B-52s for operational missions over Kuwait and Iraq during Operation Desert Storm.
- During its bombing and air refueling days the wing earned numerous awards:
  - First wing to earn the Strategic Air Command Fairchild Trophy (1951) for “outstanding bomb organization in the combined fields of navigation and bombing.”
  - Won the 1985 Fairchild Trophy for excellence in bombing and navigation.
  - Earned the Omaha trophy as SAC’s outstanding wing.

- Notable Commanders of the 97th Bombardment Wing
  - General John D. Ryan - former Air Force Chief of Staff - 97 BW/CC (1951-1953, Biggs AFB, Texas) and father of former Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael E. Ryan
  - Major General Thomas F. Rew - 3rd Air Division, Andersen AFB, Guam, (1958 - B-52 Instructor pilot at Altus AFB, 1972 97 BW Commander, Blytheville AFB, 1976-Operation Linebacker II, Vietnam)
  - Lt Gen Stephan B. Croker, Eighth Air Force Commander, 1996, 97 BW/CC, Blytheville AFB, (1985).
- The wing stood down temporarily in March 1992 until it stood up as the first Air Mobility Wing in the Air Force, on 1 October 1992 at Altus AFB, Oklahoma.



### **The First Air Mobility Wing**

- As part of an Air Force wide restructuring plan, brought on by base closures and mission adjustments, the newly designated 97th Air Mobility Wing replaced the 443d Airlift Wing, assigned to Air Training Command and the 340th Air Refueling Wing, assigned to Strategic Air Command. Initially the 97th operated under the new Air Mobility Command but within a year the mission of the Wing transferred to the revamped Air Education and Training Command.
- During this transition the 398th Operations Group, which trained KC-135 crews at the Combat Crew Training School (CCTS), Castle AFB, California operated under the 97 AMW until facilities could be constructed at Altus AFB.
- In February 1995, the schoolhouse shuttered the doors at Castle AFB and the CCTS training joined the initial KC-135 instruction at Altus AFB alongside the students attending the airlift training in the C-141 and C-5.
- In March 1996, a new airframe joined the 97th Air Mobility Wing fleet when Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Ronald R. Fogleman personally delivered the first C-17 assigned to Altus AFB, the *City of Altus*, (91-0602).
- The 97th Air Mobility Wing led the Air Force again in restructuring when the maintenance of the aircraft transferred from active duty to civil service personnel in February 1997. The transition allowed for approximately 700 permanent civilian to replace over 1,000 deployable

Airman. The change brought continuity for the new and old airframes and provided the Air Force with more personnel to accommodate the increasing temporary duty tempo.

- As the new millennium dawned, the Mighty 97th continued to evolve. The C-17 schoolhouse continued to grow and the older aircraft began to fade. In July 2001, the Wing personnel bid farewell to the C-141 instructors and aircraft.
- As the number of aircraft and students continued to grow the Wing began to provide more assistance to the mobility airlift fleet by loaning aircrews to support operational, joint training and humanitarian missions.
- Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, KC-135 crews from the 97th's air refueling squadrons supported the fighter aircraft protecting our nation's cities and a C-17 flew medical support crews from around the country to McGuire AFB to support recovery operations in New York City.
- The destruction caused by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma in the early fall of 2005 prompted the Wing to fly humanitarian missions to the areas affected in the Gulf Coast region of the United States. The Wing also sent the 97th Air Expeditionary Group Joint Task Force - Katrina to Keesler AFB, Mississippi from 19 August to 30 September 2005. The 97 AEG allowed the Keesler Airmen the opportunity to focus on their families and homes, while the task force began the recovery of the base and local area.
- In June 2007, the C-5 crews and aircraft followed a similar path as the training, operation of the largest aircraft in the Air Force inventory shifted to the Air National Guard and Air Reserve units nationwide.
- After a devastating earthquake hit the island country of Haiti, in January 2010, crews from the 58th Airlift Squadron supported Operation RESTORE HOPE. Since then, the Wing has flown semi-annual humanitarian mission in conjunction with the Denton Amendment.
- The Mighty 97th flexed its joint service capability by supporting the 31st Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Sill. The unit bolstered the self-defense capabilities of Turkey with two Patriot Missile batteries.
- For the second time in Altus AFB history, the small base in southwest Oklahoma earned the 2014 Commander-in-Chiefs Installation Excellence Award.
- Just a few weeks after being recognized as the best base in the Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah L. James toured the base and announced Altus would be the formal training unit for the KC-46 *Pegasus*. The new cargo and air refueling aircraft represents the best of both worlds to the Wing and will serve the nation for many decades to come.



**97th Bomb Group  
Medal of Honor recipient  
Lieutenant David R. Kingsley (left),**

- a bombardier assigned to the 97th Bomb Group during World War II, was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions on 23 June 1944. While on a mission over southern Europe, the B-17 that Lt Kingsley was in received heavy damage from both flack and enemy fighters. During the attack, two of the crewmembers were wounded. After Lt Kingsley rendered first aid to the injured crewmembers, the aircraft commander gave the order to bail out. However, during one of the attacks, one of the injured crewmember's parachute had been damaged and could not be used. Seeing this, Lt Kingsley took his own parachute off, placed it on the injured airman and helped the airman escape the falling aircraft. Lt Kingsley went down with the aircraft and died in the crash a few moments later.

**Altus Army Airfield Graduate  
Medal of Honor recipient  
1st Lieutenant William R. Lawley Jr.**

- after graduating multi-engine pilot training at Altus Army Airfield in April 1943, Lt Lawley transferred to the 364th Bomb Squadron arriving in England in November. On 20 February 1944, flying a B-17 over Europe, his crew came under attack from 20 enemy fighters. The enemy pilots inflicted heavy damage on his aircraft, killing the copilot, damaging one engine, hampering the controls and causing injury to several members of the crew including Lt Lawley. Despite the loss of the copilot, who slumped over the controls, Lt Lawley pulled the aircraft out of a steep dive and allowed the crewmen to render first aid to those most severely injured. Refusing medical treatment for himself Lt Lawley stabilized the bomber until finally passing out from exhaustion. As the aircraft neared the coast of England, the crew revived Lt Lawley who executed an emergency landing, saving the remaining members of the crew. After earning the Medal of Honor, Lt Lawley flew 14 additional combat missions, returning to the United States in September 1944. Following the war, Colonel Lawley retired from the Air Force in 1965.



## Wing/Air Division Commanders at Altus AFB

Commander Assumed Command

### World War II

#### Altus Army Air Field Advanced Flying School

Colonel John M. Price..... 2 December 1942

Base Closed 13 December 45 to 15 December 52

#### Tactical Air Command 63d Troop Carrier Wing

Colonel Glenn M. Jones..... 7 January 1953

Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth L. Johnson..... 20 June 1953

#### Strategic Air Command 96th Bombardment Wing, Medium

Vacant ..... 18 November 1953

\*Colonel Dearl L. Beard ..... 15 March 1954

\*Colonel Audrin R. Walker ..... 21 April 1954

\*Colonel C.F. McKenna III ..... 2 September 1957

\*Colonel John S. Samuel ..... 2 December 1957

\*Colonel Frederick R. Ramputi ..... 15 July 1961

\*Colonel Kenneth S. Steele ..... 1 August 1961

\*Colonel William B. Kyes ..... 3 March 1963

\*Colonel Merrill N. Moore ..... January 1965

Colonel Harold A. Radetsky ..... 1 August 1965

Colonel Earl S. Kimball ..... 5 July 1966

Colonel Raymond J. Bryan ..... 8 July 1966

Colonel Raymond R. Dietch ..... 11 July 1966

Colonel Joseph J. Young ..... 29 July 1967

#### Military Airlift Command 443d Military Airlift Wing, Training

Colonel Weldon D. Newquist ..... 8 April 1969

Colonel George Wentsch ..... 18 September 1970

Brigadier General Eugene B. Sterling ..... 9 June 1972

Brigadier General Tedd L. Bishop ..... 15 May 1973

Colonel Harry F. Smith, Jr ..... 14 March 1975

Colonel Maurice C. Padden ..... 9 June 1978

Colonel Phillip S. Prince ..... 30 April 1980

Colonel Jimmie L. Jay ..... 19 August 1981

Colonel Richard C. Milnes II ..... 3 January 1983

\* Denotes Air Division Commanders

Colonel John E. Haseltine.....	21 January 1985
Colonel Edward S. Brannum .....	25 March 1988
Colonel Walter S. Hogle, Jr.....	11 June 1990

**Air Mobility Command**  
**443d Airlift Wing (27 August 91 to 30 September 92)**  
**97th Air Mobility Wing (1 October 1992 - )**

Brigadier General Edward F. Grillo, Jr.....	10 November 1992
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**Air Education and Training Command**

Brigadier General George N. Williams .....	8 August 1994
Brigadier General David R. Love .....	4 December 1995
Colonel (BGen) Christopher A. Kelly .....	9 June 1997
Colonel (BGen) Michael C. Gould .....	29 January 1999
Major General Quentin L. Peterson .....	10 July 2000
Brigadier General Mark R. Zamzow .....	30 October 2001
Brigadier General Mark S. Solo.....	7 August 2003
Colonel Carlton D. Everhart II.....	22 September 2005
Colonel David W. Allvin .....	3 August 2007
Colonel Jon T. Thomas .....	14 July 2009
Colonel Anthony B. Krawietz.....	23 June 2011
Colonel William A. Spangenthal .....	27 June 2013
Colonel Todd A. Hohn.....	26 June 2015

# CURRENT AIRCRAFT FACT SHEETS

## *C-17 Globemaster III*



A C-17 Globemaster III during take-off at Altus AFB.

### **General Characteristics**

**Primary Function:** Cargo and troop transport

**Prime Contractor:** Boeing Company

**Power Plant:** Four Pratt & Whitney F117-PW-100 turbofan engines

**Thrust:** 40,440 pounds, each engine

**Wingspan:** 169 feet 10 inches (to winglet tips) (51.75 meters)

**Length:** 174 feet (53 meters)

**Height:** 55 feet 1 inch (16.79 meters)

**Cargo Compartment:** **length**, 88 feet (26.82 meters); **width**, 18 feet (5.48 meters); **height**, 12 feet 4 inches (3.76 meters)

**Speed:** 450 knots at 28,000 feet (8,534 meters) (Mach .74)

**Service Ceiling:** 45,000 feet at cruising speed (13,716 meters)

**Range:** Global with in-flight refueling

**Crew:** Three (two pilots and one loadmaster)

**Maximum Peacetime Takeoff Weight:** 585,000 pounds (265,352 kilograms)

**Load:** 102 troops/paratroops; 36 litter and 54 ambulatory patients and attendants; 170,900 pounds (77,519 kilograms) of cargo (18 pallet positions)

**Unit Cost:** \$236.7 million (FY98 constant dollars)

**Date Deployed:** June 1993

## **KC-135 Stratotanker\***



KC-135R Stratotankers on the ramp at Altus AFB.

### **General Characteristics**

**Primary Function:** Aerial refueling and airlift

**Prime Contractor:** The Boeing Company

**Power Plant:** KC-135R/T, CFM International CFM-56 turbofan engines; KC-135E, Pratt and Whitney TF-33-PW-102 turbofan engines

**Thrust:** KC-135R, 21,634 pounds each engine; KC-135E, 18,000 pounds each engine

**Wingspan:** 130 feet, 10 inches (39.88 meters)

**Length:** 136 feet, 3 inches (41.53 meters)

**Height:** 41 feet, 8 inches (12.7 meters)

**Speed:** 530 miles per hour at 30,000 feet (9,144 meters)

**Ceiling:** 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)

**Range:** 1,500 miles (2,419 kilometers) with 150,000 pounds (68,039 kilograms) of transfer fuel; ferry mission, up to 11,015 miles (17,766 kilometers)

**Maximum Takeoff Weight:** 322,500 pounds (146,285 kilograms)

**Maximum Transfer Fuel Load:** 200,000 pounds (90,719 kilograms)

**Maximum Cargo Capability:** 83,000 pounds (37,648 kilograms), 37 passengers

**Pallet Positions:** 6

**Crew:** Four: pilot, co-pilot, navigator, boom operator. Aircraft equipped with PACER CRAG do not have a navigator on most missions. The Air Force procured a limited number of navigator suites that can be installed for unique missions.

**Unit Cost:** \$39.6 million (FY98 constant dollars)

**Date Deployed:** August 1956

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\* The 97<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Wing only operates the KC-135R model

Primary Aircraft Previously or Currently Assigned at Altus Air Force Base

Altus Army Airfield

(World War II) 1943 -1945

Cessna AT- 17 *Bobcat*

Curtiss-Wright AT- 9 *Jeep*

Altus Air Force Base

Tactical Air Command - 8 January -15 October 1953

Douglas C-124 *Globemaster II*

Douglas C-476 *Skytrain*

Strategic Air Command - 18 November - 30 June 1968

C-45 *Expediter* - 1953 - unk

KC-97 *Stratofreighter* - 8 February - 12 June 1954

B-47 *Stratojet* - 19 April 1955 - 5 January 1958

B-52 *Stratofortress* - 6 January 1958 - 23 July 1968

KC-135A *Stratotanker* - 6 June 1958 - 17 November 1987

KC-135R *Stratotanker* - 18 November 1987 - Present

Atlas "F" ICBM - 10 October 1962 - 31 March 1965

Military Airlift Command - 1 July 1968 - 30 June 1991

C-141A *Starlifter* - 18 April 1969 - 7 December 1981

C-5A *Galaxy* - 17 December 1969 - 29 June 2007

C-141B *Starlifter* - 21 December 1979 - 29 July 2001

Air Education and Training Command - 1 July 1993 - Present

C-17 *Globemaster III* - 23 March 1996 - Present

KC-46 *Pegasus* -



**Office of History  
97th Air Mobility Wing  
Altus AFB, Oklahoma**

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