

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE POLICY DIRECTIVE 38-1

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Manpower and Organization

***ORGANIZATION AND UNIT
DESIGNATIONS***

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

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This Directive specifies policies concerning organization of the Air Force, including designation of units. This Directive implements statutory requirements in Title 10, United States Code, Section 8013. This publication applies to Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard.

Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the Major Command (MAJCOM) manpower, organization and resources division. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://www.my.af.mil/afirms/afirms/afirms/rims.cfm>.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This revision incorporates policy from AFPD 38-5, *Unit Designations*, and changes the name of the document from *Organization* to *Organization and Unit Designations*. Procedural guidance from AFPD 38-5 has been incorporated into AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization*, and AFPD 38-5 has been rescinded.

1. Organization.

1.1. The Air Force must be organized to best use available resources. This requires simple, streamlined structures designed for seamless transition from peace to war.

1.2. The principal characteristics desired in Air Force organizations are:

1.2.1. Mission Orientation. Organizations should have a reason to exist and should be designed to achieve the outcome defined in the applicable mission directive.

1.2.2. Unambiguous Command. Organizational structure should provide a clear chain-of-command running from the President to the most junior Airman.

1.2.3. Decentralization. Organizations should be designed so lower echelons can achieve objectives without needing continuous control from above.

1.2.4. Agility. Organizations should be structured so personnel can recognize problems, find solutions, make decisions, and implement them quickly.

1.2.5. Flexibility. Organizations should be capable of adapting rapidly to changing external circumstances.

1.2.6. Simplicity. Organizational structure should be as plain and straightforward as possible because complexity often inhibits rather than facilitates organizational effectiveness.

1.2.7. Standardization. Organizations with like responsibilities should have similar organizational structures.

2. Unit Designations.

2.1. Mission Orientation. Assign a unit a designation that describes its assigned mission.

2.2. Standardization. Use standard organization titles when possible. Organizations with like responsibilities should have like nomenclature.

2.3. Simplicity. Keep unit designations short and simple. Use more specific nomenclature at lower organizational levels, but keep the number of different titles to a minimum.

2.4. Heritage. Heritage is an important element in unit prestige, pride, and morale. It, therefore, impacts readiness and operational effectiveness. The Air Force regularly activates and inactivates units as a result of force structure and organizational changes. Throughout this process, we must take care to preserve those units with the richest heritage by keeping them in active status. This may require transferring a unit designation from one location to another.

2.5. Priorities. Use the following priorities to assign unit numerical designations for wings, independent groups, and operational squadrons. Give:

2.5.1. First priority to preserving units that trace their heritage to the original (pre-1939) Air Force formations.

2.5.2. Second priority to units with records of unique historical achievements.

2.5.3. Third priority to units which have gained the most years of service, unit decorations, and specific accomplishments.

2.6. Dependent groups and support squadrons use the same number as their parent organizations, when possible.

3. Responsibilities. The following responsibilities and authorities are established:

3.1. The Secretary of the Air Force is responsible for organizing the Air Force. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1), under the direction of the Chief of Staff, discharges this responsibility which includes:

3.1.1. Designating Air Force organizations.

3.1.2. Exercising control over the configuration of all organizational structures from MAJCOM headquarters down to flights at base level.

3.1.3. Reviewing all proposals to designate Air Force units, certifying compliance with guidelines and obtaining approval for any exceptions.

3.1.4. Issuing related guidance and procedures for functions falling within the AF/A1 purview.

3.2. Headquarters United States Air Force and the MAJCOM, field operating agency and direct reporting unit Chiefs of Manpower, Organization and Resources (and equivalent positions) follow the policies in this Directive and the associated guidance in AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization*.

3.3. The Air Force Historical Research Agency maintains, updates, and distributes annual master heritage rankings of Air Force wings and operational squadrons based on the priorities in paragraph 2.5.

MICHAEL B. DONLEY
Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

AFI 38-101, *Air Force Organization*, 16 Mar 11

Title 10 United States Code Section 8013

Adopted Forms

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*, 22 Sep 09

Abbreviations and Acronyms

MAJCOM—Major Command