



The 377th Air Base Wing is the host organization at Kirtland Air Force Base, located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The wing reports to Air Force Global Strike Command. The base and its various mission partners employ about 23,000 active duty, civilians, Guard and Reserve personnel, including approximately 1,902 active duty military and civilians that belong to Air Force Global Strike Command. Kirtland occupies 50,132 acres.

Mission and Major Organizations

The missions of Kirtland AFB fall into four major categories: research, development and testing; readiness and training; munitions maintenance; and support to base operations for more than 100 Associate Units.

The mission of the 377th Air Base Wing is to execute nuclear, readiness, and support operations for American air power. Kirtland AFB is a center for research, development and testing of non-conventional weapons, space and missile technology, laser warfare and much more. Some of the organizations involved in this area include the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, the Department of Energy, Sandia National Laboratories, the Air Force Research Laboratory, the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, the Space and Missile Systems Center, the Air Force Inspection Agency and the Air Force Safety Center.

In addition, the 377th ensures readiness and training of Airmen for world-wide duty. We operate the airfield for present and future Air Force operations, prepare our personnel to deploy worldwide on a moment's notice and keep the base secure. Some of the players in this mission include the 58th Special Operations Wing, the 150th Special Operations Wing (New Mexico Air National Guard) and the U.S. Air Force Pararescue School.

Personnel

The 377 ABW is made up of approximately 1,290 active-duty military, 760 federal civilians and 251 contractors assigned to the Medical Group, Mission Support Group, Security Forces Group, Maintenance Group, and 13 wing staff agencies.

As the host organization, the 377th Air Base Wing is also responsible for providing support to base operations. It ensures the people living and working on Kirtland AFB have the necessary support to conduct their jobs and carry out missions. This includes such things as facility maintenance, personnel support, security, utilities and medical care. The base also supports nearly 24,000 military retirees who live in central and northern New Mexico.

Economic Impact

The annual local economic impact of Kirtland AFB on Albuquerque averages more than \$7.4 billion. This includes an annual payroll of \$2.2 billion and local impact of \$4.5 billion.

History

Kirtland Air Force Base began as an Army Air Corps training field. Late in 1939, the U.S. Army leased land east of Albuquerque's newly completed municipal airport for transient military aircraft support. With World War II on the horizon, construction on an Army Air Base began in January 1941. The base was ready for initial occupation in the spring and by the summer of 1941 the first major occupants of the new base began to arrive.

First designated Albuquerque Army Air Base, the new base became Kirtland Army Air Field on February 25, 1942, in honor of pioneer Army aviator Colonel Roy C. Kirtland who had been instrumental in the forming of the Army's aviation service. Kirtland, a longtime friend of General H. H. "Hap" Arnold, died in May 1941 after being recalled to active duty.

During World War II, personnel at Kirtland Field trained several thousand aircrew members for duty on the Army Air Forces B-17, B-24, and B-29 bombers which saw action in all theaters of the war. For most of World War II, the base's major training schools, including bombardier, multi-engine transition, and combat crew training, operated at full capacity.

But, with the need for combat crews ended, Kirtland Army Air Field was placed on standby basis after the war awaiting a new mission. In February 1946, Army Air Forces leadership assigned the base to the Air Materiel Command.

The base's mission after World War II centered on flight test and support activities related to weapons development. Kirtland's role continued to increase in 1947 as the Army Air Forces became the independent United States Air Force. Kirtland Army Air Field officially became Kirtland Air Force Base on January 13, 1948. In December 1949, Kirtland Air Force Base became headquarters for a new Air Force major command, the Special Weapons Command. However, the major command status of the organization was short-lived as the Air Force evolved to face the realities of the Cold War.

The command became the Air Force Special Weapons Center on April 1, 1952, assigned to the new Air Research and Development Command, which was renamed the Air Force Systems Command in 1961. After the change in status, the personnel of the Air Force Special Weapons Center continued their weapons development and test role. In 1963, the research and development directorate of the Air Force Special Weapons Center became the core of the Air Force Weapons Laboratory at Kirtland Air Force Base, the predecessor to today's Air Force Research Laboratory directorates on Kirtland.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Kirtland Air Force Base was also headquarters for regional air defense operations which covered the southwestern United States. From a control center on Kirtland, Air Defense Command personnel could launch fighters stationed at Kirtland or other regional air bases and with a network of Aircraft Warning and Control facilities maintain command and control of a fighter throughout aerial intercepts of potential adversaries.

To reduce the management costs of multiple base near Albuquerque, Department of Defense officials merged the adjacent Sandia and Manzano Bases, which had begun respectively as a training base in 1942 and a logistics installation in 1946, with Kirtland Air Force Base on July 1, 1971. The Air Force Special Weapons Center took charge of the vastly expanded Kirtland Air Force Base complex and oversaw the base until changes in national priorities led to the center's inactivation on April 1, 1976. The Air Force Contract Management Division of Air Force Systems Command, which had moved from Los Angeles, California, in 1972, then became the Kirtland Air Force Base host for a short period. With the Department of Defense's consolidation of contract management into a single organization, the Air Force Contract Management Division was inactivated in June 1990.

Air Force leadership activated the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center at Kirtland Air Force Base effective January 1, 1974, to fulfill Congressional intent for independent evaluation of new military weapon systems. This new center at Kirtland fell directly under the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to ensure independence of review from the developing and operating commands.

On July 1, 1977, to fill the void left at the base with the inactivation of the Air Force Special Weapons Center, the 1606th Air Base Wing activated as the base host when Military Airlift Command took responsibility for operating Kirtland Air Force Base. Military Airlift Command leadership moved the 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing to Kirtland Air Force Base from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, to be the training center for the command's search and rescue personnel.

Through several re-organizations and re-assignment to Air Education and Training Command, today's 58th Special Operations Wing continues the training of specialized combat aircrew members at Kirtland Air Force Base. And, the expanded Kirtland pararescue training campus continues to produce elite warriors whose unique skills ensure "that others may live."

The Air Force Space Technology Center activated at Kirtland on October 1, 1982, to become a focal point for space technology planning and development. On December 13, 1990, the center combined with other Air Force laboratories to become Phillips Laboratory which in turn became part of the present Air Force Research Laboratory on October 30, 1997. To partner with existing expertise at Kirtland, Space and Missile Systems Center leadership renewed a space technology research and development organization in June 1993 at the base. In cooperation with other entities on Kirtland and elsewhere, Space and Missile Systems Center personnel at Kirtland rapidly transition cutting edge space capabilities to the warfighter.

After a major reorganization of the United States Air Force, the newly-formed Air Force Materiel Command took over management of Kirtland Air Force Base on January 1, 1993. Air Force Materiel Command leadership re-activated the combat decorated 377th Air Base Wing to serve as the base host.

Soon thereafter, in the summer of 1993, the Air Force Inspection Agency and the Air Force Safety Agency both moved their operations to a new complex on Kirtland as their long-time home station, Norton Air Force Base, California, was scheduled to close. Sensing a fragmentation of the service's nuclear enterprise following the inactivation of long-term champions of the sustainment of nuclear weapons, Air Force leadership returned the heritage of the Air Force Special Weapons Center to Kirtland Air Force Base. On March 31, 2006, they activated the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center and its subordinate 498th Nuclear Systems Wing to oversee the Air Force's nuclear acquisition and sustainment mission. The 377th Air Base Wing was re-assigned to the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center to remain the base host.

Following a successful re-invigoration of key components of the nuclear enterprise and the maturation of the new Air Force Global Strike Command, the 498th Nuclear Systems Wing relinquished much of its mission to the new command and inactivated on January 27, 2012. The remaining units of the wing formed the Nuclear Capabilities Directorate of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center. Combined with its numerous geographically separated entities, the men and women of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center form the Nucleus of America's Deterrence by providing nuclear weapons acquisition and sustainment.

In December of 2014, the Air Force announced plans to realign the 377th Air Base Wing under Air Force Global Strike Command and to restructure the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center to improve the effectiveness of and support for the Air Force's Nuclear Enterprise.

Though continuing under Air Force Materiel Command, the Nuclear Weapons Center will reorganize into three directorates: the Air Delivered Capabilities Directorate, the Nuclear Technical and Interagency Directorate and the ICBM Systems Directorate. The Air Delivered Capabilities Directorate will become a system program office executing acquisition and sustainment activities for gravity and cruise missile air delivered capabilities such as the B-61 and Air Launch Cruise Missile. The second new directorate will focus on interagency relationships and activities, unique to the nuclear enterprise that supports the warfighter. The ICBM Systems Directorate, located at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, is unchanged.

Kirtland Air Force Base hosts a myriad of organizations from not only Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Force Materiel Command, but Air Education and Training Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Space Command, the Air National Guard, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Department of Energy, and others. After more than seven decades of service, the many members of Team Kirtland continue to be key partners for the warfighter across a diverse set of disciplines.

(Current as of October 2020)

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