

# The developing role of the us air forces since wwi

[History](#)



The Developing Role of the US Air Forces since WWI Introduction The U. S Air Force became an independent military service at the end of 1947, following the function of the National Security Act of 1947. This Act developed the National Military Establishment that was afterwards called United States Department of Defence. Before 1947, the roles of the military Air Force were split between the Navy and the army. The United States Air Force (USAF) has been a key component of the U. S armed forces, with basic responsibilities for air defence, air warfare, and the creation of military space research. It also offers air services in synchronization with other military departments. Even though the above mentioned roles or responsibilities were simply meant for the Air force, this essay will argue that they have been changing since the First World War up to date.

The U. S military operations in the air started off with the use of balloons for investigations during the Spanish-American War and the American Civil War. After the WWI, the Air Force Service was rapidly reduced to a small fraction of its earlier power. Mitchell became a strong exponent of the movement to initiate a split air force on parity with the navy and the army. Regardless of his efforts, the Army Reorganization Act implemented in 1920 made it a combatant unit in the army. At this time, the Air Corps Act of 1926 made the Armed Air Corps to substitute the Air Service, which was responsible for the logistical support and training of its units, whereas the tactical units were controlled by the Army orders (Stiehm, 2000)

On the eve of the Second World War, dated September 1939, the air arm of the army had a total of 25, 000 men and officers and close to 1, 500 tactical planes. However, in 1940, the Air Corps were given a role to expand their operations in response to the European events of the time. In March 1942, <https://assignbuster.com/the-developing-role-of-the-us-air-forces-since-wwi/>

following American involvement into the war, the entire service unit was merged with the Army Air Forces, which was directed with the extension of the air arm.

During the WWII, the 8th and 15th Air Forces took part in the tactical bombing of Germany, along with the Royal Air Force Bomber Command. Two other air forces, namely the 9th and the 12th were responsible for supplying the U. S air corporation required in the triumphant ground campaigns in the North of Africa, Western Europe, Sicily, and Italy. In the Pacific theatre, three air forces; 5th, 7th, and the 13th units of the air forces joined the Navy and the Army in the subsequent Island invasions that were steppingstones to the defeat of Japan (Stiehm, 2000).

The arrival of the nuclear weapons meant that the U. S air force might play a decisive role in any given superpower conflicting during the Cold War. By this time, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) was established to initiate nuclear-armed bombers. SAC was given a role as the intermediate as well as long-term ballistic arms in 1956. Thus, till 1992 when SAC was abolished, it played a vital role in the nuclear deterrent forces, and was the decisive power in the Allied conquest over Iraq in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Currently, there are 9 major commands in the U. S air force, with the Air Combat Command having the role of combating aircraft established in the continental U. S.

## Conclusion

From the major developments of the role of the U. S air forces, it can be noted that responsibilities became tougher and always changed as time went by. However, the ground force, that is, the marines, the army, and the navy have criticized the USAF for providing defensive but offensive roles.

Despite this, after it was created, the USAF continuously had decisive role

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factors in contemporary warfare that should be planned and used as a self-regulating combat force anytime.

#### Work Cited

Stiehm, Judith. Bring me men and women: Mandated change at the US Air Force Academy. University of California Press, 2000..