



Fact Sheet

305TH AIR MOBILITY WING (AMC)

U.S. AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
2901 FALCON LANE, MCGUIRE AIR FORCE BASE, NEW JERSEY 08641

A Brief History of McGuire Air Force Base

The genesis of McGuire AFB was rooted in the establishment of Fort Dix during World War I. Then known as Camp Dix, it quickly became one of the most important mobilization training bases in the United States in 1917. After the war, the huge reservation continued in use as a large training ground. The first probable aircraft landing on what later comprised McGuire AFB occurred during a mock invasion of New Jersey during maneuvers of 1925. Thereafter, an unimproved airstrip cut into the pasture land, adorned with merely a windsock, near what became the Aero Club, augmented the infantry training underway at Fort Dix.

In 1937, in the midst of the nation-wide Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps built encampments on the land and later built improved concrete airstrips. The new airfield for Fort Dix was named Guy K. Rudd Field, after a Newark aviator who lost his life in an air crash in 1931. Rudd Field became part of the U.S. Army Air Corps' ambitious expansion plans, and the War Department re-designated it as Fort Dix Army Air Base in 1939. It supported the training of recently activated National Guard observation units. By 1942, Fort Dix Army Airfield, and nearly 15,000 acres of Fort Dix property passed to the new United States Army Air Forces. Aircraft such as the O-47, O-52, B-24 and B-25 flew from Fort Dix Army Airfield on important antisubmarine patrols guarding the approaches to New York City, the port at Bayonne, NJ, the Philadelphia Naval Yards and Atlantic City. As WWII wound down, the base became the eastern terminal for returning wounded from Europe and thousands of separating troops. By October 1946, all Army Air Forces operations ended on Fort Dix Army Airfield. The dormant status of the base was temporary - the Cold War and the base's strategic location between huge metropolitan areas ensured its further use.

The United States Air Force reopened the base in September 1948 and it was dedicated as McGuire Air Force Base in honor of the late Maj. Thomas B. McGuire, Jr., Medal of Honor recipient, the second leading ace in American history, and a New Jersey native born in Ridgewood. Initially, the Strategic Air Command's 91st Reconnaissance Wing was stationed here with RB-29 and RB-50 reconnaissance aircraft. Later, Air Defense Command and the 52nd Fighter Interceptor Wing took over with F-82, F-84, F-94 and F-86 jet fighters.

In 1954, a seismic shift in missions occurred at McGuire AFB—an orientation that has lasted almost 60 years. The 1611th Air Transport Wing arrived with C-54 Skymaster and C-118 Liftmaster transports, under command of Military Air Transport Service (MATS). In addition, Navy Air Transport squadrons augmented the MATS contingent with the R6D, their version of the C-118. Together, they provided passenger and cargo service to Europe and were key in the evacuation of refugees after the Hungarian revolution failed in 1956. In 1962, the Air Force's only C-135 jet transports were assigned and in 1964, the C-130E entered service with Air Force and Navy transport squadrons, replacing the C-118. With the departure of the Navy from MATS in 1966, MATS became the Military Airlift Command and the 438th Military Airlift Wing replaced the 1611 ATW. C-141s began arriving in 1967 replacing the C-135 and C-130s by 1968. During

the Vietnam War, McGuire aircrews transported troops and supplies to South Vietnam and airlifted prisoners of war from North Vietnam in 1973.

Team McGuire participated in the Beirut Marine barracks bombing airlift, the Grenada rescue effort, and the invasion of Panama in 1989, and the subsequent support of operations in Haiti. Beginning in August 1990, McGuire units supported Operation Desert Shield, the defense of Saudi Arabia. Aircrews and deployed support members began supporting Operation Desert Storm in January 1991. Combat ceased in February, followed by the massive withdrawal of troops and equipment for Operation Desert Calm beginning in March. In May 1991, McGuire aircrews began delivering food and supplies to Turkey under Operation Provide Comfort, supplying Iraqi Kurd refugees in southern Turkey and northern Iraq.

On June 1, 1992, McGuire AFB became a major part of the newly activated Air Mobility Command, made up of former MAC airlift and SAC tanker units. From 1992 to Aug. 31, 1994, McGuire developed, trained and operated the C-141B Special Operations Low-Level II (SOLL II) program supporting a wide variety of inter-service users, a mission that recently returned to McGuire with the conversion to the C-17 at Charleston AFB, SC.

From December 1992 to May 1993, McGuire supported Operation RESTORE HOPE as personnel deployed to Cairo, Egypt and Mogadishu, Somalia in December to set up operations and control the flow of aircraft in the peacekeeping/humanitarian effort for famine-stricken Somalia. McGuire aircrew and ground personnel played a critical role in airlifting the bulk of the 28,000 military troops and equipment to Somalia, resupply operations, troop movements, and eventual redeployment of troops in May 1993.

In July 1993, the base was selected by AMC officials to become the East Coast air mobility wing. As a result, the first of 24 McDonnell Douglas KC-10 Extender tanker/cargo aircraft and three C-12 Huron aircraft arrived in September 1994.

In December 1993, AMC officials selected nearby Fort Dix Army Reserve Base as the new location for the Air Mobility Warfare Center, which opened in June 1994—a mission supported by Team McGuire.

In October 1995, personnel and aircraft from McGuire deployed to Germany and the Balkan Region in support of Operation Joint Endeavor, the implementation of a peace settlement in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina. The wing played a major role in the deployment of more than 20,000 U.S. troops into the region and continues support of this ongoing operation.

The men and women of McGuire AFB continued to be in the forefront of high visibility operations with regular deployments of airlift and aerial refueling aircraft and support elements for combat operations including ALLIED FORCE over Kosovo and Operations NORTHERN and SOUTHERN WATCH enforcing no-fly zones over Iraq. Just as visible are humanitarian relief and disaster response operations including airlift missions to Central America and the Caribbean after Hurricanes Georges and Mitch in 1998. McGuire supported Operation ENDURING FREEDOM from the opening minutes of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, when McGuire KC-10s refueled aircraft flying combat air patrol missions to protect the United States. In addition, McGuire served as the primary staging area for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's relief efforts for Lower Manhattan. Most recently, McGuire was instrumental in American success during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, providing aerial refueling and airlift support before and throughout the conflict.

Team McGuire personnel can be found at virtually any USAF contingency base worldwide.