

Air Force Weather Heritage - Director of Weather



World War II leaders of the Army Air Forces Weather Service.

American entrance into World War I quickly pointed to the need for a military weather service. In July 1917, the Chief Signal Officer created a Meteorological Section within the U. S. Army Signal Corps. Following the war, the Army Air Corps became the principal user of the Army's weather services. On January 28, 1937, the Secretary of War directed the Chief of the Air Corps to assume responsibility for the military weather service.

The Air Corps established a weather service on July 1, 1937, under the direction of the chief of the newly-established Weather Section in the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps. In 1941, the Army established the Army Air Forces and the Air Staff. The Air Staff disbanded the Weather Section in 1942 and organized the Directorate of Weather. On March 29, 1943, the Air Staff reorganized and the weather directorate was eliminated. The weather function was divided across five offices within three of the new major Air Staff divisions.

Out of this division of effort, the Weather Unit of the Flight Control Service Command Section in the Office of the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for Operations, Commitments, and Requirements emerged as the coordinator of weather functions for the Air Staff. Validating what had already emerged, on July 10, 1943, the Air Staff established the Office of the Air Weather Officer, which was assumed by the Chief of the Weather Unit. On September 2, 1943, the several weather offices consolidated under the Chief of the Weather Division, in the Office of the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff for Operations, Commitments, and Requirements.

On July 1, 1945, the Army Air Forces elevated the weather service to command status, abolished the Air Staff Weather Division, and dual-hatted the Chief of the Army Air Forces Weather Service, which was redesignated Air Weather Service in 1946, as Staff Weather Officer to the Commanding General, Army Air Forces. This arrangement worked especially well after Air Weather Service moved its headquarters from Asheville, North Carolina, to the capital region.



The Air Weather Service commander continued to function as the meteorological advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. However, in June 1958, that convenience ended when the Air Force directed Air Weather Service to relocate to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, along with Military Air Transport Service to which the weather service was subordinated in 1948.

The Air Staff established the Office of the Assistant for Weather in 1958, first in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, and, following the 1963 Air Staff reorganization, in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Programs and Requirements. The Office of the Assistant for Weather remained relatively stable until 1978 when another major reorganization of the Air Staff abolished the presence of a weather office for more than two decades.

With the restructuring of the Air Force and simultaneous with the divestiture of Air Weather Service in 1991, the Air Staff established the Office of the Director of Weather. The weather directorate was formed within the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans & Operations, which was redesignated the Deputy Chief of Staff for Air & Space Operations during the 1997 Air Staff reorganization.



Air Staff Weather Officers

Chief of Weather Section

- Capt Robert M. Losey
July 1937
- Maj (later Col) Arthur F. Merewether
January 1940

Director of Weather

- Col (later Brig Gen) Don Z. Zimmerman
March 1942
- Col (later Maj Gen) Harold H. Bassett
November 1942

Air Weather Officer

- Col (later Maj Gen) Harold H. Bassett
July 1943

Chief of Weather Division

- Col (later Maj Gen) Harold H. Bassett
September 1943
- Col (later Lt Gen) Donald N. Yates
January 1945

Staff Weather Officer

- Col (later Lt Gen) Donald N. Yates
July 1945

From 1947 to 1958 the Air Weather Service commander served as meteorological advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force with no Air Staff weather office.

Assistant for Weather

- Col Richard M. Gill
May 1958
- Col James T. Seaver, Jr.
July 1960
- Lt Col (later Col) Douglas C. Purdy
September 1962
- Col Nicholas H. Chavasse
February 1963
- Col Louis A. Gazzaniga
November 1967
- Col Mortimer F. Bennet
December 1972
- Col William E. Cummins II
August 1975

From 1978 to 1991 there was no Air Staff weather office.

Director of Weather

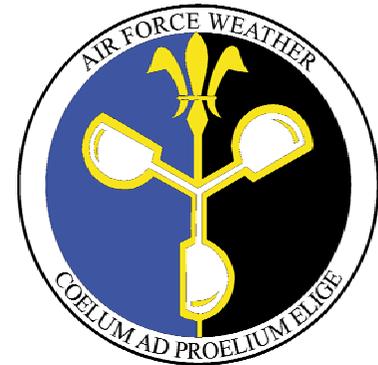
- Brig Gen John J. Kelly, Jr.
April 1991
- Brig Gen Thomas J. Lennon
May 1994
- Brig Gen Fred P. Lewis
July 1996
- Brig Gen David L. Johnson
July 2000

Ranks are highest held during the period followed in parenthesis by highest attained during career.

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Office of the Director of Weather



**Air Force Weather History Office
Air Force Weather Agency
Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska**

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