

## The Historical Development of the Air Force Materiel Command Emblem

The Air Force uses official unit emblems as visible, enduring symbols to promote esprit de corps, morale, and a sense of heritage.<sup>1</sup> Air Force Materiel Command personnel are familiar with the Command's emblem (Figure 1), but they may wonder what it represents and where it came from.



*Figure 1. Current AFMC Emblem*

What the emblem symbolizes:

“Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theatre of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The wings are representative of the Air Forces. The gear with the star and red disc is from the historical shoulder insignia approved 19 June 1947. It is symbolic of the technical air missions performed by the Command in service to the advancement of air power for our country's continued freedom.”<sup>2</sup>

The emblem represents an evolution dating back to one of AFMC's functional predecessors, the former Air Materiel Command (1946 – 1961), which later became the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC). Air Materiel Command (AMC) was established as Army Air Forces Materiel and Services on 14 July 1944, and three days later, 17 July 1944, it became a major command. AMC was then redesignated three times: on 31 Aug 1944 as Army Air Forces Technical Service Command, then on 1 Jul 1945 as Air Technical Service Command, and finally on 9 Mar 1946 as Air Materiel Command.<sup>3</sup>

During this period of development, Air Materiel Command had no authorized unit emblem, so AMC personnel wore the basic Army Air Forces patch on their uniforms (Figure 2). In 1947, however, Stephen A. Saliga, an artist designer for the AAF Research and Development program, proposed a



*Figure 2. Army Air Forces Patch*

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<sup>1</sup> AFI 84-105, 3.1., "(U) Organizational Lineage and Honors," 19 Mar 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Ltr (U), TIOH - The Institute of Heraldry (US Army), to HQ AFMC/HO, [Emblem Description], n.d.

<sup>3</sup> Ltr (U), HQ AFMC/HO, [Lineage and Honors History of the Air Force Logistics Command (USAF)], n.d.

design for a unique shoulder-sleeve insignia,<sup>4</sup> containing the elements that would evolve into the Command's emblem (Figure 3).

On 16 June 1947, AMC received approval for the shoulder-sleeve insignia. From 1947 to 1953, the Command displayed the approved insignia, in the form of a disc, but did not have an official emblem in the current shield (Figure 4).

In January 1953, AMC received an invitation to display its official flag at the inauguration of President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower. Unfortunately AMC had no authorized flag at that moment, so it could not offer up an official flag at the inauguration. As a result of this event, the Command sought and received approval to place an appropriate heraldic device on a flag for display. The design elements were the same as those that embodied AMC's shoulder-patch emblem<sup>5</sup> (Figure 5).

On Apr 1961, AMC was again redesignated, becoming Air Force Logistics Command (Figure 6). In accordance with Air Force policy on redesignations, the emblem remained the same, with only the lettering changing.

On 10 Jan 1991, the Secretary of the Air Force announced plans for the Air Force to integrate its acquisition and logistics commands into a new command. The Air Force projected 1 Jul 1992 as the date when Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) and Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) functions would be fully integrated to form the new Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC).<sup>6</sup> The Secretary underscored that the integration, "...will not be an absorption of either command into the other. In private business terms, this will be a double liquidation with a new company formed from the assets of the current



*Figure 3. Stephen A. Saliga posing with patch design*



*Figure 4AMC Shoulder Patch*



*Figure 5. AMC Emblem, 1953*



*Figure 6. AFLC Emblem*

<sup>4</sup> Newspaper (U), The Wright Flyer, News to the general public, "Shoulder Patch Designer," I: 13 (ca. 2 Aug 1991) p 1.

<sup>5</sup> Memo (U), unknown author to unknown recipient [The Emblem Displayed on AMC and AMA Flags], ca. Jun 1953.

<sup>6</sup> Ltr (U), Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) to the public and all AF organizational units, ["Air Force To Create New Materiel Command"], 1 Jan 1991.

commands.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, this integration was not a redesignation. Instead, both Air Force Systems Command and Air Force Logistics Command were inactivated on 1 July 1992.

Ordinarily, this would have meant that Air Force Materiel Command would have developed a new, unique emblem. During the planning for the activation of AFMC, however, the Commanders of AFLC and AFSC requested that the Chief of Staff of the Air Force authorize AFMC to use the Air Force Logistic Command emblem, citing its historical use by the former Air Materiel Command.<sup>8</sup> The Chief of Staff, Gen Merrill A. McPeak, agreed to the request at the Air Force's CORONA Conference in June 1991.<sup>9</sup> In continuing the use of the emblem, the Air Forces recognizes the continuity of missions performed by AFMC today with those of the old Air Materiel Command, which began during World War II.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> MOA Generals McDonald and Yates to AFMC/HO, "(U) Recommendations for Emblem and Logo of AFMC," ca. 25 Jun 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.