

## 376<sup>th</sup> AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING



### MISSION

The 376th Expeditionary Wing is responsible for providing air combat power projection throughout the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility, including tactical airlift and air refueling, principally in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. C-17 and KC-135 are involved in this effort. Additionally, the wing serves as a hub for strategic airlift operations and as an intermediate staging base for transiting personnel and equipment in support of operations in Afghanistan. The wing hosts transient forces from coalition nations, as well as transient forces of the United States Army, Marine Corps and Navy.

### LINEAGE

376<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, Medium, established, 25 May 1951

Activated, 1 Jun 1951

Discontinued and inactivated, 15 Mar 1965

Redesignated 376<sup>th</sup> Strategic Wing, 23 Jan 1970

Activated, 1 Apr 1970

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1991

Redesignated 376<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing, and converted to provisional status, 4 Dec 2001

Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after, 4 Dec 2001

### STATIONS

Forbes AFB, KS, 1 Jun 1951

Barksdale AFB, LA, 10 Oct 1951-30 Nov 1957

Lockbourne AFB, OH, 1 Dec 1957-15 Mar 1965

Kadena AB, Okinawa (later, Japan), 1 Apr 1970

Manas AB, Kyrgyzstan

### DEPLOYED STATIONS

Upper Heyford, England, 16 Jul 1955-16 Oct 1955

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

4<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 1 Jun 1951  
801<sup>st</sup> Air Division, 3 Dec 1957-15 Mar 1965  
Eighth Air Force, 1 Apr 1970  
3<sup>rd</sup> Air Division, 1 Jan 1975-1 Oct 1991

### **ATTACHMENTS**

21<sup>st</sup> Air Division, 1 Jun-10 Oct 1951

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-29, 1951-1954  
B-47, 1954  
EB47, 1954  
E-47,  
KC-97, 1953-1963  
KC-135, 1963-1964  
B-52D, 1970  
KC-135, 1970  
RC-135, 1970

### **COMMANDERS**

Col Cecil E. Combs, 1 Jun 1951  
Col Frederick J. Sutterlin, 15 Apr 1952  
Col Clifton Pyle, 23 Apr 1952  
Col Frederick J. Sutterlin, May 1952  
Col John P. Proctor, 1 Aug 1953  
Col John C. Jennison, Jr., 4 Jan 1954  
Col Robert T. Calhoun, 8 Jan 1954  
Col John W. Carroll, 1 Feb 1954  
Col John C. Jennison, Jr., 4 Feb 1954  
LTC Elmon R. Cobb, 15 Feb 1954  
Col John P. Proctor, 4 Mar 1954  
Col Stephen D. McElroy, 1 Jul 1955  
Col Robert W. Strong, Jr., 1 May 1957  
Col Ralph J. White, Nov 1957  
Col Woodrow P. Swancutt, 1 Dec 1957  
Col Charles L. Wimberly, 1 Apr 1959  
Col Alan F. Adams, 22 Jul 1961-15 Mar 1965  
BG Alan C. Edmunds, 1 Apr 1970  
Col Jack A. Weyant, 2 Sep 1970  
Col Dudley G. Kavanaugh, 30 Aug 1972  
Col Raymond L. Horvath, 10 Sep 1974

Col Lyman E. Buzard, 30 Sep 1977  
Col William F. Moffett, 21 Mar 1978  
Col David A. Oldroyd, 21 Apr 1978  
Col Donald L. Ashley, 11 Jun 1981  
Col Richard A. Skovgaard, 12 Jul 1982  
Col William R. Graves, 22 Aug 1984  
Col Patrick P. Caruana, 21 Jun 1985  
Col Larry D. Sykes, 4 Apr 1986  
Col Steve B. Borah, 9 Mar 1989  
Col Gerald M. Beverly, 31 Jul 1990-1 Oct 1991  
Col Joel Reese

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
Southwest Monsoon

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device  
1 Apr 1970-31 Mar 1972  
1 Apr 1972-28 Jan 1973

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
29 Jan 1973-31 Mar 1974  
1 Jul 1974-30 Jun 1976  
1 Jul 1976-30 Jun 1977  
1 Jul 1977-30 Jun 1979  
1 Jul 1981-30 Jun 1983  
1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1988  
1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1991

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
1 Apr 1970-28 Jan 1973

### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by 376<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Operations Group before 1 Jun 1951

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Egypt-Libya

Air Offensive, Europe

Tunisia

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

North Africa and Sicily, [Nov] 1942-17 Aug 1943

Ploesti, Rumania, 1 Aug 1943

Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, 16 Jun 1944

### **EMBLEM**



Azure, in base, a stylized winged sphinx or, shaded tenne, and fimbriated azure, on a terra cotta.

mound sanguine, in dexter chief a bomb or, point downward, charged with a roundle and a lozenge, sanguine, a triangle azure and a square sanguine, all within a diminutive of a border or. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The winged sphinx in yellow is symbolic of the service in the Middle East Theater where the group began its first historical heritage. The circle, diamond, triangle, and square are for each squadron's service in Palestine, representing the 512th, 513th, 514th, and 515th Bombardment Squadrons, respectively. The blue of the field is also emblematic of the intense blue of the African sky at night and represents the theater where heroic missions were successfully accomplished. The terra cotta red beneath the winged sphinx is symbolic of the desert around Gambut, Soluch, and Bengasi, Libya. The bomb on the shield is emblematic of the mission of the 376th Bombardment Wing (Medium). (Approved, 8 Nov 1951; updated, 31 May 2007)

### **MOTTO**

Liberandos

Liberandos is a romanticized version of the name of the 376th Bombardment Group's first aircraft, the Consolidated B-24 Liberator.

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Trained in strategic bombardment, Aug 1951-Feb 1965, with bombardment operations sometimes overshadowed by electronic counter-measures operations, which became the wing's primary mission in Sep 1953.

Ten B-29s of the 376th Bomb Wing from Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana, led by wing commander Colonel Cecil E. Combs, arrived at Sidi Slimane Air Base on May 17, 1952, for a two-week rotational training tour. This was the most complete and well equipped SAC rotational unit to arrive so far. Four days after arrival the unit launched a max effort simulated combat mission that included practice runs on the recently arrived Radar Bomb Scoring Site (RBS) located on the Marrakech airport. On departure the Wing submitted a critique of the support received from the permanently assigned base units, per SAC directive, listing all the shortcomings observed. Shortages of vehicles, some supplies, equipment, furniture and facilities were most frequently mentioned, items often not available at the home base either. The Wing critique did concede that Sidi Slimane Air Base offered a good forward operating facility.

1956 376 bombardment wings staged from barksdale to strike simulated targets in france and post strike at lakenheath, united kingdom.

During nov 63, 376 bombardment wing (bw) participated in four major air operations directed by higher headquartersthese were big blast, snowtime, hard head, and wildcat alfa.

Included EB-47 post attack command and control operations, Dec 1962-Feb 1965, and air refueling, Sep 1953-Jun 1964. From 1954 through 1965, the wing and its groups operated the B-47, E-47, and EB-47 along with the KC-97. The wing trained in strategic bombardment and at times conducted electronic countermeasures operations, which occasionally overshadowed the bomber mission. Electronic countermeasures activity became the primary mission in 1953, including training for post-attack command and control in the EB-47 aircraft from December 1962 to February 1965. The wing added aerial refueling to its mission from September 1953 to September 1964 and upgraded from the KC-97 to the KC-135 during that time. The wing was inactivated on March 15, 1965.

Conducted B-52 combat operations in Southeast Asia, Apr-Sep 1970, air refueling and electronic reconnaissance in the Western Pacific, Apr 1970, and airborne radio relay operations, Apr-Nov 1970, Feb-Jun 1971, and Mar 1972-c. Aug 1973.

The wing was reactivated at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, and designated as the 376th Strategic Wing on January 23, 1970. The wing's B-52 and KC-135 immediately began participating in ARC LIGHT bombing missions over South and North Vietnam, which continued until September 1970. In 1970, the wing was re-equipped with RC-135 and focused on electronic reconnaissance and air refueling in the western Pacific. The 376th SW provided aerial refueling to Coalition aircraft during Operation DESERT STORM before deactivating once again on October 1, 1991.

Wing's 909 ARS provided enroute refueling for aircraft transiting the western Pacific to Southwest Asia, Aug-Oct 1990, then deployed to Saudi Arabia, 5 Nov 1990-15 Mar 1991 and provided air refueling to Allied aircraft during the Persian Gulf War.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the wing was reactivated and designated the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing and stood up operations at the Manas International Airport, Kyrgyz Republic, on December 21, 2001. Since 2001, Coalition personnel and aircraft from ten countries have operated out of Manas AB to support operations in Afghanistan, including Australia, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and South Korea. Currently, 1,000 personnel from Spain, France and the United States are assigned to the wing, along with 650 U.S. and host-nation contractor personnel that provide daily support to various base missions. Aircraft assigned include U.S. KC-135s, French KC-135FRs and Spanish C-130s. Manas Air Base currently serves as the premier air mobility hub for the International Security Assistance Force and Coalition military forces operating in Afghanistan. The around-the-clock missions include aerial refueling, combat airlift and airdrop, aeromedical evacuation and strategic airlift operations, as well as support for Coalition personnel and cargo transiting in and out of Afghanistan.

Manas' Maintenance and Medical Units Inactivate The 376th Air Expeditionary Wing recently inactivated its medical group and aircraft maintenance squadron as part of its activities to vacate the Transit Center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, by July. The 376th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, which was responsible for maintaining the center's resident KC-135 tankers and transient C-17 airlifters, stood down on March 29 after 12 years at Manas. "Our maintainers have

led the way to ensure every launch was successful and every recovery was just as quick," racking up a 99.8 percent sortie-generation rate, stated 376th AEW Commander Col. John Millard in a wing release. The wing's 376th Expeditionary Medical Group inactivated in a ceremony at Manas on April 5. The center served as the main stopover for medical evacuation flights from Afghanistan to Germany. In its final year of operation, the medical group treated 12,700 patients, aided 87 aeromedical evacuations, and responded to 85 "ambulatory requests," 2014

The 376th Air Expeditionary Wing is scheduled to inactivate during a ceremony on June 3 as the Transit Center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, reverts to the authority of the Kyrgyz government, announced Air Forces Central Command on Monday. Manas served as a critical US air mobility hub for more than 12 years, with the Air Force operating airplanes including C-17 transports and KC-135 tankers from there to support the war in Afghanistan. Some 5.3 million coalition personnel transited through the center, approximately 98 percent of all coalition forces who moved in and out of Afghanistan during this period, according to the release. After the Kyrgyz government decided not to renew the United States' lease to Manas, which expires in July, US forces began drawing down from the center and shifting the mission to Mihail Kogalniceanu AB, Romania. The 376th AEW's final KC-135 sortie took place in February. At the height of its operations, the wing comprised approximately 1,500 US military personnel, along with some 900 support contractors. 2014

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 31 Aug 2011

Updated: 11 Jan 2018

#### Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *376<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (M)*. 1954.