

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



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

486<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) constituted, 14 Sep 1943

Activated, 20 Sep 1943

Redesignated 486 Bombardment Group, Heavy, 25 Jan 1944

Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945

586<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Group established, 3 Aug 1956

Activated, 15 Sep 1956

Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Sep 1962.

486<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Heavy and 586<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Group consolidated and establishment redesignated 486<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 10 Oct 1984

Activated, 27 Aug 1987

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1988

Redesignated 486<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing, and converted to provisional status, 30 Jan 2003

#### STATIONS

Davis-Monthan AAFld, AZ, 20 Sep 1943

McCook AAFld, NE, 26 Oct 1943

Davis-Monthan AAFld, AZ, 9 Nov 1943-Mar 1944

England (flight echelon), 19 Mar 1944

Sudbury, England, 5 Apr 1944-26 Aug 1945

Drew Field, FL, 3 Sep-7 Nov 1945

Hahn AB, Germany, 15 Sep 1956-25 Sep 1962

Woensdrecht AB, Netherlands, 27 Aug 1987-30 Sep 1988

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

16<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Operational Training Wing, 20 Sep 1943  
21<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Wing, 9 Mar 1944  
92<sup>nd</sup> Combat Bombardment Wing, 4 Apr 1944  
4<sup>th</sup> Combat Bombardment Wing, Feb 1945  
14<sup>th</sup> Combat Bombardment (later, 14<sup>th</sup> Bombardment) Wing, 16 Jun 1945  
Third Air Force, 3 Sep-7 Nov 1945  
701<sup>st</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 15 Sep 1956  
38<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 18 Jun 1958-25 Sep 1962  
Seventeenth Air Force, 27 Aug 1987-30 Sep 1988  
Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 30 Jan 2003

### **ATTACHMENTS**

4<sup>th</sup> Combat Bombardment Wing, 15 Nov 1944-Feb 1945

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24H, 1943-1944  
B-17G, 1944-1945  
Matador, 1956-1960  
T-33, 1956-1958  
Mace, 1960-1962  
None, 1987-1988

### **COMMANDERS**

None (not manned), 20-26 Sep 1943  
Col Glendon P. Overing, 27 Sep 1943  
Col William B. Kieffer, 14 Apr 1945  
LTC James J. Grater, c. 2 Jul 1945-unkn  
LTC Eugene G. Milling Jr., 15 Sep 1956  
LTC Hans Smithline, 1 Dec 1957  
Col Henry B. Hewett, 3 Mar 1958  
Col Edmund B. Edwards, 1 Aug 1961  
Col Herman O. Parsons, 16 Jul-25 Sep 1962  
Col Fredric L. Miller, 28 Aug 1987  
Col Calvin L. Chasteen (additional duty), 2 Jun-31 Aug 1988  
None (not manned), 1-30 Sep 1988

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

None

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
15 Sep 1956-30 Apr 1958;  
1 Apr 1959-30 Jan 1961

#### **EMBLEM**

Approved, 26 Mar 1957



#### **MOTTO**

#### **NICKNAME**

#### **OPERATIONS**

Trained in the U.S. until it moved to England in Mar 1944, assigned to Eighth Air Force. Entered combat in May 1944 with B-24 aircraft, but converted to B-17s in Jul. Operated chiefly against strategic objectives in Germany until May 1945. Targets included marshalling yards, airfields, oil refineries and storage plants, and factories. Other missions included bombing airfields, gun positions, V-weapon sites, and railroad bridges in France in preparation for or in support of the invasion of Normandy in Jun 1944; striking road junctions and troop concentrations in support of ground forces pushing across France, Jul-Aug 1944; hitting gun emplacements near Arnheim to minimize transport and glider losses during the airborne invasion of Holland in Sep 1944; and bombing enemy installations in support of ground troops during the Battle of the Bulge (Dec

1944-Jan 1945) and the assault across the Rhine (Mar-Apr 1945). Flew the last combat mission on 21 Apr 1945.

Operated chiefly against strategic objectives in Germany until May 1945. Targets included marshalling yards in Stuttgart, Cologne, and Mainz; airfields in Kassel and Munster; oil refineries and storage plants in Merseburg, Dollbergen, and Hamburg; harbors in Bremen and Kiel; and factories in Mannheim and Weimar. Other missions included bombing airfields, gun positions, V-weapon sites, and railroad bridges in France in preparation for or in support of the invasion of Normandy in Jun 1944; striking road junctions and troop concentrations in support of ground forces pushing across France, Jul-Aug 1944; hitting gun emplacements near Arnheim to minimize transport and glider losses during the airborne invasion of Holland in Sep 1944; and bombing enemy installations in support of ground troops during the Battle of the Bulge (Dec 1944-730 1945) and the assault across the Rhine (Mar-Apr 1945).

First Mission: 7 May 1944

Last Mission: 21 Apr 1945

Total Missions: 188 (46 with B-24)

Total Credit Sorties: 6,173

Total Bomb Tonnage: 14,517 tons (4.6 tons leaflets, etc.)

Aircraft Missing in Action: 33

Other Operational Losses: 24

Enemy Aircraft Claims: 8.5-1-6

In early May of 1945, the 486th took part in food drops to the Netherlands. The retreating Germans had flooded the low lands and left the Dutch in a sad state. Following VE day, the 486th conducted "Victory Tours." These tours were flown to give ground crews a look at the damage that their planes had created. These flights took up to 10 passengers with a minimum crew and flew at 2500 ft. "Survival/Mercy Missions" followed and continued into June. These missions carried food to various places in continental Europe. After dropping off the food shipment, passengers (ex-POWs or exiles) would be boarded and flown back to their homelands.

Throughout the summer of 45 the 486th made preparations for relocation to the PTO following 30 days of R&R stateside. In August the Japanese surrendered and the redeployment to the Pacific was cancelled. The final remnants of the 486th left Sudbury, England in late August, 1945. Stateside the 486th conducted operations out of Drew Field, Tampa, FL. On October 10, the airbase at Sudbury was transferred back to the RAF; the 486th was de-activated on November 4th.

The Tactical Missile Group activated in Sep 1956 at Hahn AB, Germany, assuming most of the personnel of the 69th Tactical Missile Squadron. Equipped with TM-61 Matador missiles, the group trained and remained prepared for tactical missile operations. Beginning in early 1960, the group converted to TM-76 Mace missiles. Each group would contain the launch and maintenance squadron, a Communications and Guidance squadron, and a support squadron.

The group inactivated at Hahn on 25 Sep 1962.

The 486th Tactical Missile Wing was the final GLCM (Ground Launch Cruise Missile) wing to activate in Europe and the first to inactivate following the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) Treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The wing did not receive any missiles before beginning to phase down in Jan 1988.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### 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.