

509th OPERATIONS GROUP

MISSION

The 509th Operations Group is the flying component of the 509th Bomb Wing, assigned to Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. It is equipped with all 20 of the USAF's B-2 Spirit stealth bombers, and also employs a robust fleet of T-38 Talon trainer aircraft.

LINEAGE

509th Composite Group, established, 9 Dec 1944
Activated, 17 Dec 1944
Redesignated 509th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, 10 Jul 1946
Redesignated 509th Bombardment Group, Medium, 2 Jul 1948
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 509th Operations Group, 12 Mar 1993
Activated, 15 Jul 1993

STATIONS

Wendover Field, UT, 17 Dec 1944-26 Apr 1945
Tinian, Mariana Islands, 29 May-17 Oct 1945
Roswell AAFld (later, Walker AFB), NM, 6 Nov 1945-16 Jun 1952
Whiteman AFB, MO, 15 Jul 1993

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Mildenhall England, 4 Jun 1952-16 Jun 1952

ASSIGNMENTS

Second Air Force, 17 Dec 1944
315th Bombardment Wing, 18 Dec 1944
313th Bombardment Wing, Jun 1945
Second Air Force, 10 Oct 1945
58th Bombardment Wing, 17 Jan 1946
Fifteenth Air Force, 31 Mar 1946
Eighth Air Force, 1 Nov 1946
509th Bombardment Wing, 17 Nov 1947-16 Jun 1952
509th Bomb Wing, 15 Jul 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-29, 1944-1950
C-47, 1944-1945
C-54, 1945-1946
KB-29, 1948-1952
B-50, 1949-1952
B-2, 1993

COMMANDERS

Col Paul W. Tibbets Jr., 17 Dec 1944
Col William H. Blanchard, 22 Jan 1946
Col John D. Ryan, 15 Sep 1948
Col William H. Blanchard, 21 Jul 1951-16 Jun 1952
Col William M. Fraser III, 15 Jul 1993
Col Gregory H. Power, 23 Jan 1995
Col Wilhelm F. Percival, 15 Jul 1996
Col Anthony A. Imondi, 30 Jun 1998
Col Jonathan D. George, 6 Jan 2000
Col Gregory A. Biscone, 7 Dec 2001
Col Curtiss R. Petrek, 22 May 2003
Col Robert E. Wheeler, 28 Jun 2005
Col Thomas A. Bussiere, 9 Jul 2007

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" device
1 Jul-14 Aug 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jun 1995-31 May 1997

1 Jun 1997-31 May 1999

1 Jun 1999-31 May 2001

1 Jun 2003-31 May 2005

EMBLEM

Or, in base a label of three points gules, surmounted by an atomic cloud proper, between a pair of wings conjoined in base azure. Crest: On a wreath of the colors, or and azure, an atomic cloud or, with broken pattern gules, between two lightning bolts gules. (Approved, 10 Jul 1952)

Group will use the Wing emblem with the Group designation in the scroll.

MOTTO

DEFENSOR VINDEX - Defender Avenger

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

509th Composite Group was established as the formal command center of the Group at the time of activation, 17 December 1944, though much was being done prior to this date. In addition to the Office of the Group Commander, Colonel Paul W. Tibbets, Jr, several functions vital to achieving the goals set for the Group were represented at 509th Headquarters. Among these were Intelligence, Operations, Armament, Weather, Photo Interpretation, and Personnel. Included also were the Group Bombardier and Navigator. Effective liaison between the 509th and other agencies of the armed forces and the government was a necessity because of the war-ending potential of the weapons and tactics with which the 509th was being entrusted. Communication, including the coding and decoding of messages, was thus another essential function of Headquarters.

Headquarters had the responsibility of organizing the component units of the Group and seeing that all were working together toward the common objectives. The unique requirements of the Composite Group, for which there was no precedent in the Army Air Forces, or anywhere else for that matter, required some major departures from the standard Tables of Organization for Heavy or Very Heavy bombardment groups.

There was only one bombardment squadron in the 509th instead of the usual three per bomb group. The 393rd was taken over intact from the 504th Bomb Group (VH), which was undergoing training as a conventional B-29 unit at Fairmont Field in Nebraska. However, support squadrons were incorporated as required to make the 509th largely self-sufficient.

The 509 Composite Group, the first Army Air Forces group to be organized, equipped, and trained for atomic warfare, moved to Tinian by Jun 1945 and flew practice missions through July against Truk Island, Caroline Islands and Marcus Island for which group received credit for participation in Eastern Mandates campaign. Conducted high altitude individual aircraft missions against targets on the islands of Japan. On 6 Aug 1945 a B-29 named the "Enola Gay," piloted by the group commander, Col Paul W. Tibbets Jr., dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days

later "Bock's Car" piloted by Maj Charles W. Sweeney, dropped a similar bomb on Nagasaki. These two bombs, the first atomic weapons ever employed, contributed immensely to the war's end. Completed 50 combat missions and received credit for participation in Air Offensive Japan campaign.

The group moved to Roswell Army Air Field, Roswell, NM, Oct-Nov 1945. In Mar 1946, the group provided the nucleus for the Strategic Air Command's atomic striking force. Later in 1946, participated in atomic tests (Operation CROSSROADS) at Kwajalein Island in the Marshall Islands.

After completion of Operation CROSSROADS, returned to Roswell AAF where the group was nearly demobilized due to loss of personnel and equipment. Returned to operational status Feb 47. Except for two periods when the group was not operational (17 Nov 1947-14 Sep 1948 and 10 Feb 1951-16 Jun 1952), participated in joint Army-Navy maneuvers called Nullus Operations. Conducted 150 missions in conjunction with Group's Phase III training. Participated in Pacific maneuvers.

Since 1993, supported, maintained and operated aircraft fleet that enabled the 509 Bomb Wing to fulfill its mission of conducting conventional or nuclear operations. Elements flew non-stop bombing missions from stateside base to Kosovo and returned during Kosovo Campaign.

The B-2 bomber fleet set a record in April for sorties and hours flown in a single month, according to officials at Whiteman AFB, Mo., home to these stealth bombers. Members of Whiteman's 509th Bomb Wing, together with their partners in the Missouri Air National Guard's 131st BW, flew 142 sorties in the month, amassing 839.3 hours, states the base's May 9 release. "Any bad guy in the world watching us over the last 30 days saw a whole lot of airplanes doing a whole lot of flying. That's a strong message," said Col. Chase McCown, 509th Maintenance Group commander. B-2 maintainers achieved a mission-capable rate of nearly 70 percent for the month, some 15 percent above the bombers' average rate, said McCown. That's not an easy feat, he said, given the amount of maintenance required to maintain the low-observable qualities of the 20-aircraft fleet. "We proved we have proficient operators and maintainers who can surge operations and put jets in the air," said Col. Edward Martignetti, 509th Operations Group commander. Among their activity, B-2 pilots flew long-duration sorties, trained with special operators, and worked with F-22s, he said.

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