

## 556 TEST AND EVALUATION SQUADRON



### MISSION

The 556 Test and Evaluation Squadron at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., executes MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aircraft System OT&E and FDE for the Aerospace Command and Control Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center and tactics development for ACC. The 556 TES provides operational expertise to developmental test and evaluation for new sensors, hardware, weapons and software upgrades. During the first months of existence, the squadron's aircrew launched the first AGM-114 Hellfire missile from a U.S. Air Force UA and was instrumental to bringing the capability to fly and control four UA with one pilot to the warfighter. The 556 TES is integral to "normalizing" the first advanced concept technology demonstration into a major weapon system and is heavily involved with the development of the MQ-9 Reaper and MQ-1C an Army Warrior variant aircraft. In addition, the 556 TES conducts special access projects and field visits to familiarize and instruct operational units on new developments and tactics.

### LINEAGE<sup>1</sup>

15 Photographic Mapping Squadron constituted, 9 Jun 1942  
Activated, 20 Jun 1942  
Redesignated 15 Photographic Squadron (Heavy), 6 Feb 1943  
Redesignated 15 Combat Mapping Squadron, 21 Jan 1944  
Redesignated 15 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, 31 Aug 1944

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<sup>1</sup> Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

Inactivated, 28 Oct 1945  
Redesignated 15 Reconnaissance Squadron (Photographic), 29 Apr 1947  
Activated, 19 May 1947  
Inactivated, 3 Dec 1947  
Disbanded, 8 Oct 1948

556 Reconnaissance Squadron constituted and activated, 15 May 1968  
Organized, 1 Jul 1968  
Inactivated, 30 Jun 1972

15 Reconnaissance Squadron (Photographic) and 556 Reconnaissance Squadron consolidated  
and redesignated 556 Tactical Intelligence Squadron but remained inactive, 19 Sep 1985

Redesignated 556 Test and Evaluation Squadron, 16 Jan 2008  
Activated, 15 Feb 2008

### **STATIONS**

Colorado Springs, CO, 20 Jun-13 Aug 1942  
Membury, England, 7 Sep 1942  
Steeple Morden, England, 27 Oct-21 Nov 1942  
La Senia, Algeria, 6 Dec 1942 (A flight of air echelon arrived Tafaraoui, Algeria, 18 Nov 1942, and  
moved to Algiers, Algeria, 27 Nov 1942 Band C flights of air echelon at Colorado Springs to 12  
Oct 1943 and Will Rogers Field, OK, 14 Oct 1943-21 Jan 1944)  
Algiers, Algeria, 25 Dec 1942  
Le Kroub, Algeria, 5 Jun 1943  
La Marsa, Tunisia, 28 Jun 1943 (detachments operated from Le Kroub, Algeria, to 14 Jul 1943, and  
from Grottaglie, Italy, after 4 Oct 1943)  
Grottaglie, Italy, Nov 1943  
Bari, Italy, 28 Dec 1943-Oct 1945  
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 26-28 Oct 1945  
Langley Field, VA, 19 May 1947  
Lawson Field, GA, 8 Sep 1947  
Pope Field, NC, 1 Oct-3 Dec 1947  
Yokota AB, Japan, 1 Jul 1968-30 Jun 1972  
Creech AFB, NV, 15 Feb 2008

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

3 Photographic (later Photographic Reconnaissance and Mapping, later Photographic) Group, 20  
Jun 1942  
5 Photographic (later Reconnaissance) Group, 21 Jan 1944-28 Oct 1945  
67 Reconnaissance Group, 19 May 1947  
10 Reconnaissance Group, 24 Jul-3 Dec 1947  
347 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul 1968  
6100 Air Base Wing, 15 May 1971

475 Air Base Wing, 1 Nov 1971-30 Jun 1972  
53 Test and Evaluation Group, 15 Feb 2008

## **ATTACHMENTS**

5 Photographic Group from 21 Nov 1943

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1942-1943  
P-38/F-4, 1942-1943  
P-38/F-5, 1943-1945  
Potez 540, 1943  
B-17, 1943-1944  
B-25, 1943-1944  
F-6, 1947  
C-130, 1968-1972  
RC-130

## **COMMANDERS**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt John M. Noble Jr., 20 Jun 1942  
Maj Wayne E. Thurman, 17 Jul 1942  
Capt Charles M. McDermott, 13 Aug 1942  
Maj Wayne E. Thurman, 1 Oct 1942  
Capt Leon W. Gray, 6 Jun 1943  
Capt Oscar M. Blomquist, 12 Jul 1943  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Richard H. Burnor, 21 Nov 1943  
Capt Joseph E. Terrett, 14 Jan 1944  
Capt Horace H. Myers, 10 Jul 1944  
Capt Exum F. Bullard, Sep 1944  
Maj Virgil A. Dinneen, 8 Dec 1944-unkn  
Unkn, 19 May 1947  
Maj James M. Williams, Jul-3 Dec 1947  
Lt Col Glen W. Statum, 1 Jul 1968  
Lt Col C. N. Rice Jr., 26 Aug 1969-30 Jun 1972

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Air Offensive, Europe  
Tunisia  
Sicily

Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Rhineland  
Central Europe  
Po Valley  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation: MTO, 6 Sep 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1968-30 May 1969

1 Jun 1969-31 May 1970

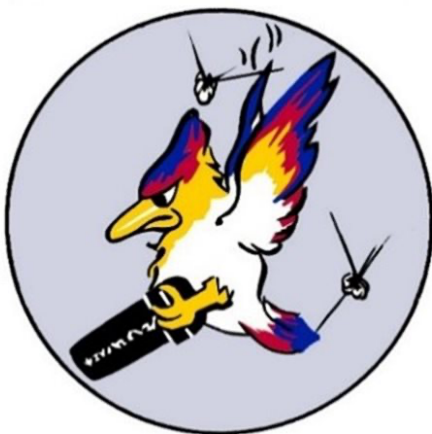
30 May 1970-15 Apr 1971

16 Apr 1971-15 Apr 1972

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jul 1968-31 May 1972

### **EMBLEM**



15 Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: On a light pastel blue disc, edged black, a caricatured red, blue, Yellow orange 7 and white kingfisher, in toward dexter, holding in the claws a black aerial camera focused toward dexter base, all between two, small, black “ack-ack” bursts, proper. (Approved, 21 Feb 1945)



556 Reconnaissance Squadron emblem: approved, 14 Aug 1969



556 Test and Evaluation Squadron patch

### **MOTTO**

### **OPERATIONS**

Combat in Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO) and European Theater of Operations (ETO), Nov 1942-4 May 1945.

Squadron personnel and aircraft deployed to detachment based at Cam Ranh Bay AB, Republic of South Vietnam, which flew combat reconnaissance missions in Southeast Asia (SEA), 1968-1972.





556 Reconnaissance Squadron revetments at Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam. C-130s and AQM-34 drones visible



556 Reconnaissance Squadron AQM-34L Compass Bin drone



EB-57E, 1970

3/11/2008 - CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFNS) -- The 556 Test and Evaluation Squadron became the Air Force's first operational test squadron for unmanned aircraft systems during a ceremony March 5 here. The stand-up is concurrent with the inactivation of the 53rd Test and Evaluation Group Det. 4. The Airmen, employees and equipment of the detachment will transition into the 556 TES. The new squadron will provide support to UAS operations worldwide, through force development evaluations, the development of training, tactics and procedures, systems expertise and meeting warfighters' urgent need requests. The change also provides the unit with the efficiency and credibility to manage the increasing mission requirements of the UAS. "Unmanned Aircraft Systems is a growth industry both with the numbers and types of vehicles, as well as the complexity of those machines," said Col. Ken Wilsbach, the 53d Wing commander. "This is an excellent opportunity to provide the warfighter with those advanced capabilities and tactics to support the war on terrorism."

The new unit already received three new MQ-1 Predators in February and anticipates another one by the end of the year. Additionally, the unit is scheduled to receive its first of four MQ-9 Reaper aircraft in 2010, thus increasing the workload and flying requirements. This knowledge drove the request for the transition. Although the squadron is growing, the manpower will not immediately increase creating some unique obstacles. "It will definitely be a significant challenge, but our job is to ensure the right improvements get to the warfighter as complete and as fast as possible," said Lt. Col. Ty Movers, the 556 TES commander. The colonel said the unit will augment their aircrew, which is qualified in multiple aircraft systems with experienced combat aviators.

"This is a team effort and we'll continue to work closely with our developmental test counterparts in San Diego along with the warfighters at Creech and Nellis (AFBs) to increase our efficiencies," he said. He is honored by the outstanding Airmen under his command and their consistent ability to accomplish the mission and maximize the combat capabilities of our warfighters, he said. The 556 was chosen by Air Combat Command for its lineage and history of surveillance. The 556 Reconnaissance Squadron, a C-130 Hercules squadron, previously held the moniker from 1968-1972. The 53rd Wing's mission is to support the Combat Air Forces by testing

and evaluating new/fielded weapon systems, aircraft systems and support equipment. The Wing is headquartered at Eglin AFB, Fla., and maintains 17 geographically separated units throughout the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.