

4252 STRATEGIC WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

Activated, 1 Dec 1965

Inactivated, 4 Jan 1970

STATIONS

Kadena AB, Okinawa

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-52, 1968-1970

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Activated at Kadena AB, Okinawa, on 12/1/65, initially as an air refuelling outfit. Inactivated on 1/4/70 and replaced by the 376 SW. Possible that the 4252 SW exercised operational control over the B-52Ds at Kadena from 2/68, although subordinate MajCom units may have been established to facilitate control.

Colonel(Later Brig Gen) Morgan S. Tyler, Jr., First Commander, 4252 Sw (Sac)

Before 1965 had reached its second week, tanker operation acquired the nickname by which they were to be known for the ensuing eight years and more — Young Tiger. This was the term applied to the KC-135s arriving at Kadena to fulfill the mission of the 4252d Strategic Wing (SW) which was activated on 12 January that year. That unit's immediate primary mission, then, was to build up to a force of 15 tankers by 30 June and to develop Don Muang as a forward operating base (FOB). But as is so often the case with well laid plans things started to go awry within a month of the wing's activation. What happened was later described by the wing's first commander, Brig Gen Morgan S. Tyler, Jr., who was then a colonel, as "rampant confusion." It came about because of a rapid and unexpected early influx of many more KC-135s to support upcoming bomber operations.

As its major subordinate unit, the 3d Air Division had the 3960th Strategic Wing (SW),* likewise located at Andersen AFB, Guam, with the mission of furnishing logistical and administrative support to the division. The 3d Air Division also operated Detachment 1 at Yokota AB, Japan, and Detachment 2 at Kadena AB, Okinawa. Detachment 1 had responsibility for supporting 3d Air Division's communications in Japan, SAC flights transiting the country and the like. The

responsibilities of Detachment 2 involved communications, too, as well as 3d Air Division's contacts with 313th Air Division (Fifth Air Force, Pacific Air Forces) host unit at Kadena AB. Now, with formation of the new wing, the 4252d also became a subordinate unit of 3d Air Division as envisioned in the Tamale Pete planning. For the first time, 3d Air Division was going to become responsible for KC-135 operations of its own, as contrasted with rendering support for tankers routed through its locations by its higher headquarters. Activated on 12 January, the new 4252d routinely flew its first operational mission on 25 January. In fact, for just about the first This unit was designated the 3960th Combat Support Group (CSG) for a while from 1964 until early 1965.

U-Tapao's tanker task force, appropriately named Giant Cobra, began on 11 August 1966 with a force of ten KC-135s and without incident. Five of the tankers had deployed from Kadena, the other five being additional aircraft coming into Southeast Asia from the CONUS. At the end of that month, SAC shifted five more tankers from Takhli to U-Tapao making the latter the main KC-135 base in Southeast Asia with a total of 15 aircraft. Takhli remained a forward operating base with operational control of the Giant Cobra task force firmly held by a detachment of experienced people from the 4252d Strategic Wing. The plan was to retain this arrangement until early 1967 when U-Tapao would become a main operating base. Then, the 4258th Strategic Wing would take control of both the U-Tapao and Takhli tankers and the Don Muang operation would close down

Actually, U-Tapao was still under construction in June. There had been some delays, but there had been some last minute compensating shifts in priorities to speed up its operational readiness by keeping people housed in tents, using makeshift water and sewage facilities longer than expected, and cutting planned air conditioning to the barest minimum. The net result was to make it the more austere in its earlier days. Major Stewart, Chief of Programs Branch, 4252d Strategic Wing, later remarked to the effect that U-Tapao was built in a rush to get more tanker operations going as soon as possible. The need was so great that the tankers were brought in and flown even though there were still big, open holes in the ramp near the fuel pits and even though there was as yet only one taxiway connecting with the runway.

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It was while this arrangement was in effect that far-reaching changes occurred in Strategic Air Command's organization in the Western Pacific area. On 1 April 1970, Headquarters 3d Air

Division was replaced on Guam by Headquarters Eighth Air Force, formerly located at Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts. On the same day the 3d's former subordinate units were also renamed, the 4252d Strategic Wing became the 376th Strategic Wing at Kadena; the 4258th Strategic Wing became the 307th Strategic Wing at U-Tapao; and the 3960th Strategic Wing became the 43d Strategic Wing at Andersen. All the new units succeeded to the personnel, missions and bases of their respective predecessors. Now, plans rapidly matured to take Arc Light bomber operations not only out of Kadena but also out of Andersen.

4252d Strategic Wing

Organized and activated 12 January 1965 at Kadena AB, Okinawa. Inactivated 1 April 1970.

Replaced by 376th Strategic Wing.

Col Holley W. Anderson (Acting)	12	Jan 1965 - 17 Feb 1965
Col Morgan S. Tyler, Jr. (later BG)	18	Feb 1965 - 18 Jul 1967
Col Eugene A. Stalzer (later BG)	19	Jul 1967 - 3 Aug 1969
Brig Gen Alan C. Edmunds	4	Aug 1969 - 1 Apr 1970

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Sources

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