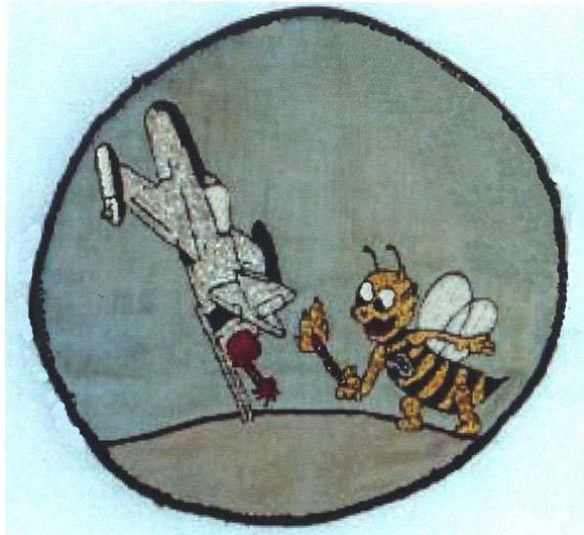


1 TACTICAL MISSILE SQUADRON



LINEAGE

881 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy constituted, 19 Nov 1943
Activated, 20 Nov 1943
Inactivated, 17 Jan 1946

1 Pilotless Bomber Squadron, Light, constituted, 19 Sep 1951
Activated, 1 Oct 1951
Redesignated 1 Tactical Missile Squadron, 8 Jun 1955
Inactivated, 18 Jun 1958

881 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy and 1 Tactical Missile Squadron consolidated,
19 Sep 1985. Consolidated organization retains 1 Tactical Missile Squadron designation and
remains inactive.

STATIONS

Gowen Field, ID, 20 Nov 1943
Clovis AAFld, NM, 16 Dec 1943
Walker AAFM, KS, 16 Apr 29 Jul 1944
Isley Field, Saipan, 19 Sep 1944 15 Nov 1945
March Field, CA, 29 Nov 1945 17 Jan 1946
Patrick AFB, Fla, 1 Oct 1951-9 Mar 1954
Bitburg AB, West Germany, 20 Mar 1954-18 Jun 1958

ASSIGNMENTS

500 Bombardment Group, 20 Nov 1943-17 Jan 1946
Air Force Missile Test Center, 1 Oct 1951

6555 Guided Missile Wing (later, 6555 Guided Missile Group), 1 Feb 1952
Tactical Air Command, 15 Jan 1954
Twelfth Air Force, 20 Mar 1954
7382 Guided Missile Group, 15 Apr 1956
585 Tactical Missile Group, 15 Sep 1956-18 Jun 1958

ATTACHMENTS

6555 Guided Missile Wing, 1 Oct 1951-30 Jan 1952
36 Fighter-Day Wing, 14 Mar 1955-15 Apr 1956

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1944
B-29, 1944-1945
JB-2 Loon, 1951
MGM-13 Mace, 1951-1954
MG1M-1 Matador, 1954-1962

COMMANDERS

2nd Lt William S. Salup, Jan 1944
Maj Theodore B. Stanson, Feb 1944
Lt Col Ralph A. Reeve, 17 Apr 1944
Maj Horace E. Hatch, 21 Jun 1945-17 Jan 1946
Unkn, 1 Oct-18 Nov 1951
Lt Col Louis O. Carroll, 19 Nov 1951
Lt Col Walter Schlie, 29 Aug 1955
Lt Col Louis A. Wright, 15 Jul 1956
Maj Richard E. Eliassen, Mar 1957
Lt Col George L. Ingersoll, 3 Jul 1957-18 Jun 1958

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific
China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Nagoya, Japan, 23 Jan 1945
Japan, 15 20 Jun 1945

EMBLEM



881 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy emblem

1 Tactical Missile Squadron emblem: On a shield Air Force blue, bordered White, outlined black, a rectangular checkerboard, palewise, red and White; overall an armored gauntlet, black, detail and highlights White, the cuff marked with a heart Air Force yellow; grasping a stylized missile, White, pointing to dexter chief, all bendwise; and in saltire with a lightning bolt, Air Force yellow, sinister bendwise. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The blue of the field of the shield and the golden yellow of the lightning bolt are the Air Force colors. The gauntlet signifies strength and guidance; the missile represents the mission and relates to the unit's pioneer work on many "firsts" in missile development and employment. The lightning bolt symbolizes the electronic nature of the mission. The red and White checkerboard portrays the unit's adopted colors. The shield identifies the unit with the wing. (Approved, 18 Jan 1957)

MOTTO

PIONEERS

OPERATIONS

The 881st Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, activated on 20 Nov 1943 as part of the 500th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, remained unmanned until late Jan 1944. Trained in preparation for overseas duty. A lack of B-29s caused the squadron to first train on B-17s and B-25s. This situation did not ease until the squadron entered its final phase of training before departing for the Pacific Theater. The ground echelon departed for overseas duty from Walker AAF, KS, on 23 Jul 1944 and arrived on the island of Saipan, after a voyage aboard the SS Alcoa Polaris, on 19 Sep 1944. After arrival the ground echelon constructed housing for both men and equipment. The air echelon began arriving at Isley Field, Saipan, on 6 Nov 1944. On 11 Nov 1944 the squadron participated in a mission against the Japanese naval base at Truk.

Combat operations against the Japanese home islands began on 24 Nov 1944 with an attack against the Nakajima Musashino Aircraft Engine Plant in Tokyo. From Nov 1944 to early Feb 1945 the squadron concentrated its bombing efforts on the Japanese aircraft industry. On 4 Feb the 881st shifted to night incendiary raids on Japanese urban areas. The missions from 27 Mar to 28 Apr 1945 concentrated on Japanese airfields in support of the American invasion of Okinawa. The final phase of the squadron's bombing operations consisted of both day and night incendiary raids against Japanese cities. After 14 Aug 1945, the 881st flew relief supply missions to prisoner of war camps in Japan, Korea, and Formosa. The air echelon returned to the United States on 24 Oct 1945. Ground echelon personnel rejoined the air echelon at March Field, Calif, on 29 Nov 1945 Where the squadron inactivated on 17 Jan 1946.

The 1st Pilotless Bomber Squadron was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Giannatti initially, but Lieutenant Colonel Louis O. Carroll assumed command on 19 November 1951. By the end of December 1951, Carroll's squadron consisted of 17 officers and 73 airmen, but tents had to be set up near two of Patrick 's barracks in December to shelter 174 additional airmen who reported to the Squadron in mid-January 1952.

The 1st PBS was joined at Patrick AFB in January, 1952, by the second operational missile squadron, the 69th Pilotless Bomber Squadron (Light). Each Pilotless Bomber Squadron had an assembly and checkout section, maintenance section, guidance section, and a launching section.

As the Air Force began to develop its operational concepts for guided missiles, it soon realized the research and development organizations at Patrick and Holloman were not suited for large scale, on-going training of missile launch and maintenance crews. The Tactical Air Command, resurrected from the Continental Air Command on December 1, 1950, would be the Air Force command for tactical missiles, and therefore had the responsibility to train the new missile crews. The 1st PBS and the 69th PBS were officially relieved from the 6555th Guided Missile Group, Air Force Missile Test Center, Air Research and Development Command, at Patrick AFB, and reassigned to Ninth Air Force, TAC, on January 15, 1954. Secretary of the Air Force Harold E. Talbot announced at the same time that both the 1st and the 69th would soon be deployed to Germany to bolster NATO.

The 1st PBS officially became part of NATO at Bitburg Air Base, Germany, on March 31, 1954. Once there, the squadron conducted simulated countdowns and crew training exercises. During Operations SUNTAN (Sep 1954), SUNBURST (Jun 1955), and SUNFLASH (Jan-Mar 1956) elements of the squadron conducted deployment and live fire exercises at Wheelus AB, Libya.

Redesignated 1st Tactical Missile Squadron on 8 Jun 1955, the squadron continued to perform training missions and exhibitions for allied leaders until it inactivated on 18 Jun 1958.

Each of the tactical missile squadrons consisted of three combat flights, lettered as "A", "B", and "C" Flights. Each flight consisted of two launch elements, each element having four

missiles. Each flight also had an assigned off-base location, usually located up to five miles from the squadron support area.

The 1st PBS set up its first combat off-base location high on one of the highest hills just above the village of Steinborn. Steinborn, known as "A" pad, was located about 12 miles northeast of Bitburg Air Base, and about 20 miles southeast of Priim, an established tactical control radar site. "B" pad was established closer to the town of Bitburg, overlooking the adjacent village of Rittersdorf. The third pad, "C" Pad, was about ten miles south of Bitburg.

A typical Matador launch crew consisted of nine members; one commissioned officer who served as Launch Officer, and eight enlisted men who performed duty as drivers as well as their assigned crew positions.

By 1956, a standard squadron operational configuration and combat procedures had been developed by USAFE. One of the three combat flights of each squadron was on combat alert at all times in a state of readiness that would years later become known Air Force wide as Victor Alert. The combat flights rotated the Combat Alert duty on a regular basis. This posture would allow USAFE to launch 24 Matadors within 8 hours of the EWO (Emergency War Order) to launch. The remaining launch elements were to be deployed to their pre-assigned off-site dispersal areas, allowing 36 more Matadors to be launched within 72 hours.

The command link to the Twelfth Air Force was a tactical missile launch officer "in the cave" at Ramstein who reported directly to the Air Control Officer. He had a direct communications link to each of the Tactical Missile Squadrons. Targets for the tactical missiles had a set of parameters needed to develop the information that went into each target's "folder." The target folder was actually a manila folder kept in a secure file cabinet. When a target was assigned to a missile, that target folder was pulled and the information passed to the units that not only launched the Matador, but to the MSQ Guidance and Control vans scattered throughout the German countryside. The initial MSQ units to pick up a launched missile were called "feeder" flights and they controlled the missile until a handoff to the MSQ forward flights located from 50 to 200 miles away from the launch point. The range of the Matador was actually 200 miles from the point the missile passed into unfriendly territory, quite different from the concept of only a 200 mile range from its launch point.

Operationally, the Air Force was learning quickly that missile squadrons and aircraft squadrons operated on different philosophies. To further hone its organizational alignment of units, a new naming protocol was developed to more accurately identify the missions of the units. With the Matador units assigned to the Tactical Air Command, and deployed overseas with tactical fighter wings, the Air Force eliminated the term pilotless bomber and renamed the Matador to tactical missile.

Tactical Missile Squadrons were true pioneers in developing a whole new set of technologies, strategies and even languages within the United States Air Force. Dispersion became the

primary description of how the missiles were to be deployed, even when the initial alert launches were to be from the permanent off site locations. The term "Go-No Go" became a quick, simplified response to missile checkout as long checkout and repair of individual components were no longer acceptable to maintaining alert status missiles. Assembling, testing, and launch preparations of the Matadors were completely different in the cold freezing rain and short German winter days than in the balmy Florida or New Mexico sunshine. Maintaining the Matadors was no longer done in the comfort of open air hangars, rather in damp, often dark buildings better described as shelters, heated only by portable aircraft heaters that were often inadequate.

Working on the missiles in the light fatigue uniforms or T-shirts with ocean breezes was a thing of the past. Working and training in parkas, gloves and thermal underwear became the norm of working in the open German countryside and forests. They learned to check their missile in driving rains and bitter cold. They learned that many of the concepts they had developed needed revision. They learned that many techniques which had produced excellent results in Florida produced nothing but bitter failure in the damp German forest.

James J. Haggerty, a writer for Collier's Magazine, had the opportunity to visit one of the 1st PBS's launch pads in 1955 and was startled by the lack of security. He was amazed there wasn't even a fence around the pad! The squadron commander commented, "We have reason to believe we have been photographed. We couldn't care less. These pads are primarily for training purposes. If we have to start firing for real, we'll be out there somewhere," waving his arm in a wide semi-circle. "They'll have to find us all over again. And we'll be raising quite a bit of hell while they're looking."

The 1st TMS was inactivated and replaced by the 71st Tactical Missile Squadron, 18 Jun 1958

DETACHMENTS

Det 1 Driedorf, West Germany; later moved to Bremerhaven, West Germany: 15 Apr 1954-15 Sep 1956.

Det 2 Giebelstadt, West Germany: 15 Apr 1954-15 Sep 1956.

Det 3 Landsberg AB, West Germany; later moved to Schwarzenborn, West Germany: 15 Apr 1954-15 Sep 1956.

Det 4 Schonfeld, West Germany: 1 Mar 1955-2 Jan 1956

Det 5 Breitsol, West Germany: 15 Feb 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 6 Hulseberg, West Germany: 1 Jul 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 7 Winterberg, West Germany: 8 Jun 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 8 Diepholz, West Germany: 8 Jun 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 9 Driedorf, West Germany; later moved to Camp De Daaden, West Germany: 8 Jun 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 10 Hallgarten, West Germany): 8 Jun 1955-15 Sep 1956

Det 11 Zell, West Germany): 1 Jun-15 Sep 1956

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 25 Oct 2023

Updated:

Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *36 Fighter Bomber Wing, Germany, 1954.*