

# 392 AEROSPACE MEDICAL GROUP



## MISSION

## LINEAGE

392 Aerospace Medical Group

## STATIONS

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

Col Oliver R. Seaman

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## **OPERATIONS**

The 392nd Aerospace Medical Group, under the command of Col. Oliver R. Seaman, is responsible for the operation of the new four-storied, 125-bed Composite Medical Facility at Vandenberg opened July 1, 1967. Completed at a cost of almost five million dollars, this modern facility took nearly two years to construct. In addition to its normal function of providing medical care to the many active and retiree military families living on or near Vandenberg, the Group is equally involved in the immense task of maintaining the efficiency of the 16,000 - man military and civilian work force of the base.

Specialized medical care and medical support has to be provided for the missile weapon system programs. Medical teams and ambulances completely outfitted with oxygen resuscitators, protective clothing and first aid medicants are present at the missile site during all launches in the event of a mishap. Medical personnel highly skilled in the unique characteristics of missile fuels conduct safety lectures for the men who must handle these volatile substances. Constant research is pursued to ensure that all potentially harmful aspects of such operations are determined and disseminated before the fact is discovered through personnel accident. And with the intense missile launch activity at Vandenberg, the Group is constantly concerned with the possibility, however remote, of sudden and fearful disaster. Adequate and effective emergency plans are maintained to cover every contingency so that all necessary medical resources can be immediately mobilized and utilized. In this respect, the mission of the 392nd AMG is as diversified and critical as any to be found on the most active aircraft base.

None of the units currently stationed on base including 1STRAD has had as much continuous service at Vandenberg as the 392nd Aerospace Medical Group. In fact, the Group was originally activated here six days before the base was officially transferred from the Army to the Department of the Air Force. June 15, 1957, the 392nd USAF Hospital was activated at Cooke Air Force Base (Vandenberg) and assigned to the 392nd Air Base Group under the 1st Missile Division. New construction and major rehabilitation had started at Cooke only a month before and it was a major task for the new unit to establish and refurbish the long dormant medical facilities.

With the activation of the 704th Strategic Missile Wing (Atlas) July 1, 1957, the 392<sup>nd</sup> was reassigned from the Air Base Group and a month later the Division assumed operational control of the Wing and its Hospital. At that time, both the base and the units were assigned to the Air Force Research and Development Command (AFRDC). On Jan. 1, 1958, along with the base and all other AFRDC units at Cooke, the 392nd was transferred to the Strategic Air Command and reassigned directly to the 1st Missile Division. The year 1958 saw an increase in the Hospital's responsibilities as new missile squadrons were activated, Air Force families started moving into the newly completed Capehart Housing, missileers from the RAF Thor units arrived for training, and the first missile launch was accomplished.

The Group designation came into being Jan. 1, 1959 when the USAF Hospital was redesignated

to the 392nd Medical Group, and July 21, 1961, the word Aerospace was added to bring the unit to its present designation. For years, the Group operated out of old World War II type wooden facilities at the head of Oregon Avenue. July 1, 1967 it transferred activities to its present location —and the next day the first baby was born in the brand new facility. Another “first” was added recently when the 392<sup>nd</sup> became the first hospital to use the new USAF C-9A “Nightingale” jet aircraft for the urgent transfer of a patient. This aircraft was specifically designed for aeromedical evacuation.

THE 392nd AMG EMBLEM Except for the familiar caducean design in the center, much of the symbolism in the 392nd AMG emblem is not readily decipherable to the casual observer, yet each component of the design directly relates to the unit’s mission or the environment in which it operates. The design was prepared by USAF heraldic artists-at Randolph AFB and was approved for use July 28, 1966. The major theme refers to the missile environment surrounding the Group’s operations. The unusual pattern of the Air Force blue and gold background is actually an “M” alluding to these missiles. The gold and orange star on the silver ring in the lower left blue segment signifies “nuclear fission and the far reaching aspects of SAC’s Aerospace Program.” The orange design within the silver ring to the right represents an INFERNO denoting “the action which occurs within the missile’s propulsion chamber and symbolizes the power generated by the missile crews.” Superimposed in the center of the gold background is the winged “Staff of Aesculapius,” symbol of the Greek god of medicine. The club-like staff and coiled snake are textured in red, the traditional color of medicine, and the wings are silver. This symbol, of course, represents the USAF Medical Service and in conjunction with the aerospace symbolism of the emblem, signifies “the Group’s continuing commitment to Aerospace Medicine.

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