

498th NUCLEAR SYSTEMS WING



MISSION

The 498th Armament Systems Wing is responsible for sustainment of nuclear munitions and cruise missiles. The ARSW is composed of three groups and includes the operation of two munitions maintenance and storage complexes, one at Kirtland AFB and the other at Nellis AFB, Nev., along with the 498th Missile Sustainment Group, Tinker AFB, Okla. This encompasses the entire scope of nuclear weapon system support functions to include sustainment, modernization and acquisition support activities for both the DOD and DOE.

LINEAGE

498th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy established, 19 Nov 1943
Activated, 20 Nov 1943
Inactivated, 4 Aug 1946
Redesignated 498th Tactical Missile Group and activated, 16 Sep 1960
Organized, 8 Feb 1961
Inactivated, 31 Dec 1969
Redesignated 498th Armament Systems Wing, 14 Feb 2006
Activated, 31 Mar 2006
Redesignated 498th Nuclear Systems Wing, 1 Apr 2009

STATIONS

Clovis AAFld, NM, 20 Nov 1943
Great Bend AAFld, KS, 13 Apr-13 Jul 1944
Isley Field, Saipan, 6 Sep 1944-2 Nov 1945
March Field, CA, Dec 1945
MacDill Field, FL, 5 Jan-4 Aug 1946
Kadena AB, Okinawa, 8 Feb 1961-31 Dec 1969

Kirtland AFB, NM, 31 Mar 2006

ASSIGNMENTS

73rd Bombardment Wing, 20 Nov 1943
Fifteenth Air Force, 19 May-4 Aug 1946
Pacific Air Forces, 16 Sep 1960
313th Air Division, 8 Feb 1961-31 Dec 1969
Nuclear Weapons Center, 31 Mar 2006

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1944
B-29, 1944-1946
RB-24, 1944
Mace, 1961-1969

COMMANDERS

None, not manned, 20 Nov-10 Dec 1943
LTC Joseph H. West, 11 Dec 1943
Maj Crocker Snow, 20 Jan 1944
Col Wiley D. Ganey, 14 Mar 1944
Col Donald W. Saunders, 10 Aug 1945-unkn
Col Richard T. King Jr., unkn-4 Aug 1946
LTC Clyde R. Borchers, 8 Feb 1961 (acting), 19 Jul 1961
Col Warren E. Vinzant, 1 Aug 1961
Col Hubert W. Gainer, 17 Jul 1965
Col Peter H. Spear, 27 Jan 1967
Col Merle Johnson, 18 Jul-31 Dec 1969
Unkn, 31 Mar 2006
Col Harry L. Andrews, 26 Jun 2006
Col Richard M. Stuckey, 24 Jun 2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Air Offensive, Japan
Eastern Mandates
Western Pacific

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Japan, 13 Dec 1944

Japan, 1-7 Jun 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

8 Feb 1961-29 May 1963

1 Jul 1965-31 Dec 1966

1 Jan-31 Dec 1967

1 Jan-31 Dec 1968

1 Jan-31 Dec 1969

EMBLEM



498th Tactical Missile Group emblem

498th Nuclear Systems Wing emblem: Azure, in chief an atomic symbol Or, between two laurel sprigs arching convexly Vert surmounted abase a gauntlet Proper grasping and emitting four lightning bolts in saltire of the second, all within a diminished bordure of the same. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "498TH NUCLEAR SYSTEMS WING" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The gauntlet with lightning bolts represents the nuclear age deterrent. The laurel wreaths symbolize the security and test of will in maintaining the world encompassing goal of lasting peace. (Approved, 25 Aug 2009)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Trained in B-17s and B-29s and moved to Saipan Jul-Nov 1944. Flew its first combat missions against Iwo Jima and the Truk Islands. On 24 Nov 1944, participated in the first assault on Japan by B-29s operating from the Marianas. Conducted numerous attacks against industrial targets in Japan, flying in daylight and at high altitude to carry out these missions. Received a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for striking an aircraft engine plant at Nagoya on 13 Dec 1944. Began flying missions at night in Mar 1945, operating from low altitudes to drop incendiaries on area targets in Japan; received a second DUC for incendiary raids on urban industries near Kobe and Osaka during Jun 1945. Operations also included strikes against Japanese airfields during the Allied invasion of Okinawa in Apr 1945.

Returned to Okinawa in 1961 and was equipped with Mace Missiles and provided air defense of the Ryuku Islands through 1969.

The officer Manpower authorization is 75 with 76 assigned, and the airmen authorization is 588 with 630 assigned. This figure does not include the 35 Martin Company personnel and the 40 military personnel who are assigned solely for the IC&V (Installation, Checkout and Verification) effort. When fully operational, the unit will be responsible for operating and maintaining four hardened missile sites containing 32 operational missiles. The unit equipment authorization is 36 missiles.

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara directed in early 1962 that the existence of the TM-76B weapons system on Okinawa "was not to be publicized in any way." He directed that the "missile, warhead section, and nose sections be transported to and from the launch sites under a canvas cover." Fearing political maneuvering and protests from Communist sympathizers on Okinawa and in Japan, the 498th TMG was directed to be identified by initials only. The island of Okinawa at the time was under the administrative control of the United States and technically not a part of Japan, which specifically prohibits the stationing of nuclear weapons on its soil. The U.S. military had used Okinawa as a major staging area for conflict in Asia since renegotiating a U.S.-Japanese peace treaty in 1951 that gave the U.S. administrative control over the Ryukyuan island chain. The U.S. referred to the islands as Japanese "residual sovereignty," and on May 15, 1972, three years after the shutdown of the last Mace missile, returned control of Okinawa to Japan. All U.S. nuclear weapons were removed from all military bases on Okinawa well in advance of the return of Okinawa as a prefecture of Japan.

The 498th Tactical Missile Group stationed at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa was assigned to the 313th Air Division. Operational control was maintained by Fifth Air Force, Fuchu Air Station, Tokyo, Japan. The 498th Group's subordinate units were originally the 873rd Tactical Missile Squadron and the 498th Missile Maintenance Squadron.

In the Far East, the 498th Tactical Missile Group was drawing up a plan that would launch one of the unit's Mace missiles from an operational hardsite to comply with Secretary of Defense Robert 's goal of testing operational readiness of all U.S. missile systems. On October 16, 1963, Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm A. McNall, Jr., the 498th Deputy Commander, drew up a letter in which the subject of a CGM-13C launch from one of the hardened sites on Okinawa was discussed in some detail. Colonel McNall addressed the Deputies of Operations and Material for the 498th TMG on the subject of "Training/Confidence Launch." He noted that he would like Major Wallace N. Robinson 111, the

Group Standardization Officer, to head a committee which would develop a plan for the launch of a missile from Site 1 (Bolo Point) during the months of February or March 1964. Astonishingly enough, the plan initially won approval from the Fifth Air Force and PACAF itself.

The last Martin Marietta CGM-13B Mace missiles were taken off alert duty in October, 1969, when the 498th Tactical Missile Group at Kadena Air Base was inactivated. That was not the end of their military careers, however. While many of the Mace school training missiles at Orlando AFB, Florida, and Lowry AFB, Colorado, were given to communities and museums as monuments, most of the old birds were to finish their military careers by taking the one single flight they were designed for. The mission was not to attack a ground target, rather it was to be an aerial one.

In the Pacific, the 498th TMG on Okinawa also went on alert with the new TM-76B. Maintenance personnel were issued small arms and assigned to guard details while the launch sites quietly went about their business of Victor Alerts. Several crews did not rotate for the first several days of the heightened status. The crew on duty at Site 2 at White Beach remained "in the hole" for 72 hours.

Since its activation in Mar 2006, the wing sustains US nuclear munitions and cruise missiles, including their maintenance, storage, modernization and acquisition support activities for both the Department of Defense and Department of Energy.

Fission and Fusion: As part of the Air Force's organizational moves to bolster oversight of its nuclear weapons, the service formally relocated on Oct. 25 the 498th Munitions Maintenance Group, along with its new subordinate unit, the 19th Munitions Squadron, from Kirtland AFB, N.M., to Whiteman AFB, Mo. "Our nuclear arsenal is the ultimate backstop of our nation's strategic defense and these units ensure Whiteman is prepared and ready for this responsibility," said Gen. William Fraser, Air Combat Command boss. With the change, the 498th MUMG still retains command of the 898th Munitions Squadron and 708th Nuclear Sustainment Squadron at Kirtland. And the group remains subordinate to the 498th Nuclear Systems Wing at Kirtland, which reports directly to the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, also at the New Mexico base, where it oversees the sustainment of Air Force nuclear weapons and support equipment in the continental US.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 23 Nov 2010

Updated:

Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.