

596 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, HEAVY



MISSION

LINEAGE

596 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) constituted, 20 Mar 1943

Activated, 20 Apr 1943

Inactivated, 31 Dec 1945

Redesignated 596 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy and activated, 15 Nov 1962

Organized, 1 Feb 1963

Inactivated, 1993

STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 20 Apr 1943

Avon Park Bombing Range, FL, 14 Oct 1943

Hunter Field, GA, 1 Nov 1943-13 Mar 1944

Gosfield, England, 5 Apr 1944

Rivenhall, England, 15 April 1944

Hurn, England, 4 Aug 1944

Gorges, France, 30 Aug 1944

Dreux, France, 16 Sep 1944

Peronne, France, 8 Oct 1944

Venlo, Holland, 25 Apr 1945

Peronne, France, 30 May-c. Dec 1945

Camp Kilmer, NJ, 30-31 Dec 1945

Dow AFB, ME, 1 Feb 1963

Barksdale AFB, LA, 1968

ASSIGNMENTS

397 Bombardment Group, 20 Apr 1943-31 Dec 1945

Strategic Air Command, 15 Nov 1962

397 Bombardment Wing, 1 Feb 1963

2 Bombardment Wing, Heavy

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-26, 1943-1945

A-26

B-52, 1963

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Eller, Germany, 23 Dec 1944

EMBLEM



On a disc trisected red, brown, and green, trisection angle starting from vertical division line at top, a silver winged sword with gold hilt, guard, and pommel, palewise, striking with impact mark of eight, white rays on either side, and cleaving shackle chains fastened to silver slave bracelets, one to dexter, one to sinister, all within a white border, edged golden orange. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The insignia of the 596th was emblematic of the worldwide struggle for liberation, of which the Squadron was an integral part. Its theme was represented by the winged sword of justice breaking the shackles of oppression and slavery. (Approved, 20 Mar 1945)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The 596th Bombardment Squadron, Medium was constituted by the War Department on March 20, 1943. Having been assigned to the 397th Bombardment Group, it was activated on April 20, 1943, and like most of the Squadrons stationed at Dow began its history during World War II. For the 596th in particular December 23, 1944 was a red-letter day, remembered for the desperate attempts exerted by German fighters and anti-aircraft batteries during the famed "Battle of the Bulge." The target for the 596th on that day was the Eller Railroad Bridge across the Moselle River. It was an important target, one selected for destruction to hamper enemy movement into the critical area of battle.

The Squadrons in the 397th Bombardment Group shared the Distinguished Unit Citation they earned during this attack, one of 239 missions in which the 596th Squadron participated during World War II. After World War II the unit was inactivated on December 31, 1945, and remained in that status for almost 17 years. The 596th Bombardment Squadron was redesignated from medium to heavy on November 15, 1962. At the same time it was activated and assigned to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) for organization and further assignment to the 397th Bombardment Wing. It was organized on February 1, 1963, at Dow Air Force Base, Maine.



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