

# 6541 OPERATIONS GROUP

## MISSION

## LINEAGE

6541 Operations Group

## STATIONS

Patrick AFB, FL

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## OPERATIONS

The 6541st Missile Test Wing was activated with nine squadrons numbered consecutively 6541st through 6549th. Those squadrons were created to operate range tracking systems on the Eastern Range's mainland and downrange stations. The 6548th and 6549th Missile Test Squadrons were discontinued on 25 November 1951, but the remaining seven squadrons were deployed between the Cape and Grand Turk by the end of 1952. They were redesignated as operations squadrons when the 6541st Missile Test Wing became the 6541st Operations Group on 1 March 1953.

Though Air Force personnel operated tracking systems on the Eastern Range through December 1953, cost comparison studies undertaken two years earlier pointed out the desirability of letting contractors operate the Cape and the downrange stations. The first range contract was signed with Pan American World Services on 31 December 1953. Pan American signed its own contract with RCA to make the latter responsible for operating and maintaining range stations and tracking systems as of 28 February 1954. The Air Force Missile Test Center began transferring property and equipment to Pan American at the end of 1953. In the meantime, the 6541st Operations Group replaced three of its squadrons with detachments on 1 January 1954. Those detachments were discontinued along with the Group's remaining four squadrons on 1 July 1954. Pan American and RCA took over their functions.

On 7 September 1954, a major reorganization of AFMTC discontinued four of the Center's five group-level organizations and consolidated most routine support functions in the hands of the 6550th Air Base Group. That action allowed the Headquarters to concentrate on policy matters, long-range planning and overall management, but it also heralded the demise of the 6555th Guided Missile Group and the 6541st Operations Group (Range) mentioned earlier. Though there were many organizational changes in the years that followed, the Center's functional role as planner and coordinator and the Air Base Group's role as base support agency were firmly established. Pan American and RCA operated the Eastern Range under contract to the Air Force for the next 34 years (until early October 1988).

In 1988, the old Range Contract was divided into the Range Technical Services (RTS) and the Launch Base Services (LBS) contracts. The RTS Contract was awarded to Computer Sciences Raytheon (CSR) in June 1988, and the LBS Contract was awarded to Pan American World Services (later known as Johnson Controls) in August 1988.

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