

48 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

48 Bombardment Group (Light) established, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 48 Bombardment Group (Dive), 28 Aug 1942
Redesignated 48 Fighter-Bomber Group, 15 Aug 1943
Redesignated 48 Fighter Group, 30 May 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 48 Fighter-Bomber Group, 25 Jun 1952
Activated, 10 Jul 1952
Inactivated, 8 Dec 1957
Redesignated 48 Tactical Fighter Group, 31 Jul 1985
Redesignated 48 Operations Group, 1 Mar 1992
Activated, 31 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Savannah, GA, 15 Jan 1941
Will Rogers Field, OK, 26 May 1941
Savannah, GA, 7 Feb 1942
Key Field, MS, 28 Jun 1942
William Northern AAFld, TN, 20 Aug 1943
Walterboro AAFld, SC, 27 Jan-13 Mar 1944
Ibsley, England, 31 Mar 1944
Deux Jumeaux, France, 18 Jun 1944

Villacoublay, France, 29 Aug 1944
Cambrai/Niergnies, France, 15 Sep 1944
St. Trond, Belgium, 30 Sep 1944
Kelz, Germany, 26 Mar 1945
Kassel, Germany, 17 Apr 1945
Illesheim, Germany, 29 Apr 1945
Laon, France, 5 Jul-Aug 1945
Seymour Johnson Field, NC, 9 Sep-7 Nov 1945
Chaumont AB, France, 10 Jul 1952-8 Dec 1957
RAF Lakenheath, England, 31 Mar 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

15 Bombardment Wing, 15 Jan 1941
II Air Support (later, II Ground Air Support) Command, 1 Sep 1941
XII Bomber Command, 2 May 1942
III Bomber Command, 8 May 1942
III Ground Air Support (later, III Air Support) Command, 10 Aug 1942
III Fighter Command, 6 Aug 1943
IX Air Support (later, IX Tactical Air) Command, 31 Mar 1944
XIX Tactical Air Command, 28 Apr-Aug 1945
First Air Force, 9 Sep-7 Nov 1945
48 Fighter Bomber Wing, 10 Jul 1952-8 Dec 1957
48 Fighter Wing, 31 Mar 1992

ATTACHMENTS

I Air Support Command for operational control, 10 Sep 1943-14 Jan 1944

WEAPON SYSTEMS

A-20, 1941-1944
A-24, 1941-1944
A-35, 1941-1944
B-18, 1941-1944
P-39, 1941-1944
P-40, 1941-1944
A-31, 1941-1944
A-36, 1941-1944
P-47, 1944-1945
F-84, 1952-1953
F-86, 1954-1957
F-111, 1992
F-15, 1992
HH-60, 2004

COMMANDERS

Maj Bernard S. Thompson, 15 Jan 1941
Col Norman R. Burnett, unkn
Col Preston P. Pender, unkn
Col Robert Selway, unkn
Col Charles C. Kegelman, Apr 1943
Col Dixon M. Allison, 8 Nov 1943
Col George L. Wertenbaker Jr., 23 Apr 1944
Col James K. Johnson, Oct 1944
LTC Harold L. McNeely, 8 Jun 1945
LTC Paul P. Douglas, 28 Jun 1945-unkn
Col Chesley G. Peterson, 10 Jul 1952
Lt Col Arthur D. Thomas, 1 Jun 1953
Col Frank A. Hill, Oct 1953
Col Arthur D. Thomas, Jul 1954
Lt Col John D. McFarlane, c. Jul 1955
Lt Col Thomas M. Hergert, by late 1956
None, not manned, 15 Mar-8 Dec 1957
Col Patrick F. Nolte, 31 Mar 1992
Col Glen W. Moorhead III, 4 May 1992
Col Kenneth M. Decuir, 22 Jul 1994
Col Norman R. Seip, 22 Feb 1997
Col Steven R. Eddy, 28 Oct 1997
Col Jack B. Egginton, 3 Nov 1999
Col Benjamin G. Hensley, 28 Nov 2000
Col William J. DelGrego, 19 Jul 2002
Col Ronald K. Laughbaum, 13 Aug 200
Col Garvin A. McGettrick, 29 Jun 2006

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Europe
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe
Air Combat, EAME

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Germany, 6 Dec 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1996

1 Aug 1996-30 Sep 1998

1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000

[14 Apr]-10 Jun 1999

1 Oct 2000-24 Sep 2002

1 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004

1 Oct 2004-31 Oct 2005;

1 Nov 2005-31 Dec 2006;

1 Jan-31 Dec 2007

1 Jan-31 Dec 2008; 1 Jan 2009-31 Dec 2010.

Cited in the Orders of the Day, Belgian Army

6 Jun-30 Sep 1944

1 Oct-17 Dec 1944

18 Dec 1944-15 Jan 1945

Belgian Fourragere

EMBLEM



48 Fighter Group



48 Fighter-Bomber Group

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 48 Bombardment Group served as a replacement training unit from Jan 1941 through early 1944.

In early 1944, after years of training and flying across the US, the 48 returned to the East Coast. At first the group conducted coastal patrol missions and training in the single-seat fighter it would use throughout World War II, the P-47 Thunderbolt. After three months in South Carolina, the group moved up to Camp Shanks, New York and prepared for its embarkation to Europe.

On 21 March 1944, the men of the 48 Fighter-Bomber Group boarded the Queen Mary, bound for an unknown and uncertain service in World War II. After a week of sea travel, the contingent arrived at Gourock, Scotland. From there they traveled by train for two days to their first overseas base, RAF Station Ibsley in Southern England.

Almost immediately after their arrival, members of the 48 began a rigorous training program, flying dive-bombing, glide bombing, night flying, low-level navigation, smoke laying, reconnaissance, and patrol convoy sorties. Over the next two months, the number of sorties steadily increased and the group flew its first combat missions on 20 April 1944—an uneventful fighter sweep of the occupied French coast.

Unknown at the time to the pilots of the 48, all of their training was specifically designed for a campaign against the German positions in Normandy. On 6 June 1944, the 48 participated in a massive invasion of France, which included more than 14,000 sorties flown by the allied air forces. The three squadrons assisted the Normandy invasion by dropping bombs on bridges and gun positions, attacking rail lines and trains, and providing visual reconnaissance reports. Over the course of the Normandy campaign, the 48 flew nearly 2,000 sorties, dropping nearly 500 tons of bombs and fired more than 160,000 rounds of ammunition.

With the pocket in Northern France secured, the group quickly moved into the recently conquered territory. On 18 June, the 48 moved its operations, along with the 492d and 493d Fighter Squadrons to Deux Jumeaux, France. The 494th Fighter Squadron followed on the 4th of July. From Deux Jumeaux, the 48 began a mission it would continue throughout the war: providing support for the First Army.

In late July 1944, attacks from the air helped the First Army break through the German positions at Saint Lo, France. In saturation attacks, the 48 struck tanks, convoys, gun positions, and ammunition dumps as the allied ground forces pushed the German army back. Keeping up with the front lines, the 48 was constantly on the move. It arrived at Villacoublay, France, on 29 August, Cambrai/Niergnies, France, on 15 September, and St Trond, Belgium, on 30 September. The 48 twice received the honor of being mentioned in Belgium's "Order of the Day" and assisted in the attack of German positions in Holland.

One of the 48's most memorable attacks took place on 6 December 1944. Despite difficult weather and heavy enemy fire, the 48's pilots struck German buildings and troop concentrations in Julich,

Germany, allowing ground forces to advance into the sector and earning the 48 a Distinguished Unit Citation.

Two weeks later, the group was called on to hold back a massive German assault in the “Battle of the Bulge.” The 48 flew under heavy weather with its allies as the German military committed its forces in an all-out assault. Often flying as low as 20 feet off the ground, the men of the 48 strafed ground positions, holding back the Nazi armies in their last major offensive.

By 1945 the allies had gained nearly complete air superiority, allowing the 48 to conduct its missions at will. As the front line moved eastward, so did the 48 Fighter Group: moving into Kelz, Germany, on 26 March; Kassel, Germany, on 17 April; and Illesheim, Germany, on 29 April. Within a week of the group arriving at Illesheim, the allied nations celebrated Victory in Europe Day. Finally, on 8 May 1945, the 48 flew its final mission from Illesheim. Captain Troy Smith observed the ground situation: “They were in retreat by the tens of thousands. They were walking on one side of the road, guns slung over their shoulders, and our guys were on the other side of the road in convoys going the other way. At that point, I knew it was really over.”

A month after the war ended, the 48 retraced its steps as it headed toward home. On 5 July 1945, the group arrived in Laon, France. After a few weeks back in France the group received orders to return to the US. With many of the group’s members separating at port, those remaining set up the group headquarters at Seymour-Johnson Field, North Carolina. Two months later on 7 November 1945, the 48 Fighter Group and its flying squadrons inactivated as part of the massive postwar draw down.

The group flew F-84s and later F-86s in France in support of United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) from Jul 1952-late 1957.

When it activated in Mar 1992, it phased out the F-111 aircraft assigned to the 48 Fighter wing and was equipped with F-15 aircraft. Over the next twelve years, the 48 flew missions in support of USAFE and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Throughout the 1990s the group deployed elements to Southwest Asia and to Italy to support the following major combat Operations: Northern Watch; Provide Comfort; Deny Flight; Decisive Endeavor; Deliberate Guard/Forge; Sky Anvil; Noble Anvil. It also supported the Aerospace Expeditionary Force and provided elements that participated in Iraqi Freedom.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.