96 TEST WING (AFMC)


Operations. Activated in Jul 1942 and manned in early Aug, the 96 Bombardment Group spent the next six months training with B-17s and as an operational training unit. Entered combat in May 1943 and functioned primarily as a strategic bombardment organization throughout the war. Attacked shipyards, harbors, railroad yards, airdromes, oil refineries, aircraft factories, and other industrial targets in Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Received a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for withstanding severe assault by enemy fighters to bomb the vital aircraft factories at Regensburg on 17 Aug 1943. Received another DUC for leading components of the 45 Combat Bombardment Wing, Heavy, a great distance through heavy clouds and intense antiaircraft fire to raid important aircraft component factories in Poland on 9 Apr 1944. In addition to strategic operations, missions included bombing coastal defenses, railway bridges, gun emplacements, and field batteries in the battle area prior to and during the invasion of Normandy in Jun 1944; attacked enemy positions in support of the breakthrough at St. Lo in Jul 1944; aided the campaign in France in Aug by striking roads and road junctions and dropping supplies to French resistance members; and attacked, during the early months of 1945, the transport centers supplying German armies on the western front. After V-E Day, flew food to Holland and redeployed personnel to French Morocco, Ireland, France, and Germany. Briefly active in the Reserve from May 1947-Jun 1949; conducted routine training activities. Although the wing was established in Nov 1953, its headquarters and components were not manned until Mar 1954; the 96 Air Base Group, whose commander served additional duty as wing commander, controlled the few manned units. Began air refueling operations in Mar 1954 and bombardment training in Apr 1955 in support of SAC's global commitments. Deployed to Guam, Jan-Apr 1957. Controlled a strategic airlift squadron, Sep 1959-Mar 1961, and an Atlas missile squadron, Jul 1961-Mar 1965. The first Atlas missile went on alert in Apr 1962. During several months in 1970 and in 1972-1973, all wing aircraft, crews, and most support personnel were loaned to other SAC organizations in the Far East or Southeast Asia for combat operations. From 1980, the wing's KC-135A aircraft regularly deployed to Europe, Alaska, and the Pacific to support SAC tanker task force requirements. Became the first wing to operate the B-1B, after the arrival of the first aircraft in Jun 1985. In Oct 1986, B-1Bs assumed SAC alert duties for the first time. Wing KC-135 tankers provided refueling support to units involved in the invasion of Panama, Dec 1989. Ferried personnel and equipment to Guam for further movement to Southwest Asia, in Aug 1990. Single KC-135s provided refueling support throughout Southwest Asia, Aug 1990-Mar 1991. Ended bombardment mission and inactivated in Oct 1993. Provided services and support for the Air Force Development Test Center (later, Air Armament Center) and its tenant organizations, Mar 1994-.
Service Streamers. None.

Campaign Streamers. *World War II: Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe.*

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers. None.


Lineage, Assignments, Components, Stations, and Honors through Oct 2014.

Commanders through Oct 2014; Aircraft, and Operations through Oct 2014.

Emblem. Approved on 18 Feb 1943.