

144th OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

The 144 Operations Group is home to the 194 Fighter Squadron and the 144 Operations Support Flight which directly support the Air Sovereignty Alert mission and daily flying training in the F-15 Eagle.

LINEAGE¹

372 Fighter Group constituted, 12 Oct 1943
Activated, 28 Oct 1943
Redesignated 372 Fighter-Bomber Group, Apr 1944
Redesignated 372 Fighter Group, Jun 1944
Inactivated, 7 Nov 1945
Redesignated 144 Fighter Group
Allotted to ANG (CA), 24 May 1946
Extended federal recognition, 2 Jun 1948
Redesignated 144 Fighter-Bomber Group, 1 Dec 1952
Redesignated 144 Fighter Interceptor Group, 7 July 1955
Inactivated, 9 Jul 1976
Inactivated 30 Jun 1974
Redesignated 144 Operations Group, 16 Mar 1992
Activated

¹ Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

STATIONS

Hamilton Field, California, 28 Oct 1943
Portland AAB, Oregon, 7 Dec 1943
Esler Field, Louisiana, 29 Mar 1944
Pollock AAFld, Louisiana, 14 Apr 1944
Esler Field, Louisiana, 9 Feb 1945
Alexandria AAFld, Louisiana, 14 Sep-7 Nov 1945
Naval Air Station Alameda, California, 25 June 1948
Hayward ANGB, California, 1949
Fresno Yosemite International Airport, California, 1957
Fresno ANGB, California, 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

IV Fighter Command, 28 Oct 1943
III Fighter Command, 29 Mar 1944-7 Nov 1945
61st Fighter Wing, 2 June 1948

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

P-40
P-51
F-102
F-51, 1948
F-86, 1954
F-16, 1989
F-15, 2013

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

Maj Francis E Brenner, 28 Oct 1943
Maj Darrell G Welch, 21 Dec 1943
Maj Joseph S Wakefield, 4 Feb 1944
Maj John R Harrison, 16 Feb 1944
Lt Col Sam W Westbrook, 3 Mar 1944
Lt Col Robert W Stephens, 17 Mar 1945
Lt Col Jack J Oberhansly, 30 May 1945
Col George R Bickell, 6 Aug-7 Nov 1945
Lt Col George D. Middleton
Col Reed C. Drake, May 2011
Col John York

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

American Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

Azure, three clouds two and one argent, issuing from the second cloud two lightning flashes one terminating on the first cloud and the other on the third cloud golden orange; in chief three mullets of the second. (Approved, 10 Feb 1954)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS²

Functioned as an operational training unit. Also provided air support for air-ground maneuvers and demonstrations, participating in the Louisiana Maneuvers in the summer of 1944 and in similar activities in the US until after V-J Day.

The 61st Fighter Wing, the antecedent of the 144th Fighter Interceptor Wing, was federally recognized 4 Apr 1948 under the command of Gen Lawrence C. Ames. The Wing was stationed at the National Guard Center at Alameda, CA. Federal recognition was extended to the 144th Fighter Group on 2 Jun 1948.

The 144th Fighter Bomber Group and the 194th Fighter Bomber Squadron were activated as the 372d Fighter Group and the 409th Fighter Squadron, respectively, 28 October 1943 at Hamilton Field, California. In March 1944 both were sent to Alexandria, Louisiana, where they remained throughout the war. While the units were stationed at Alexandria, they participated in a number of joint air-ground maneuvers including the "Louisiana Maneuvers" held late in 1944. The units demonstrated for ground troops, showing the power of close air-ground support. Green troops saw bombing and strafing attacks with guns and rockets in support of ground forces. Both units suffered personnel shortages. Pilots and ground crews were constantly withdrawn for combat replacements overseas. "Non-essential" people were transferred to the ground forces to help fill the gaps caused by the heavy fighting in Europe and the Pacific. Many pilots "rotated" home from combat were assigned to the units bringing a valuable store of experience to the units. Inactivation came to the units at Alexandria on 6 November 1945. On 24 May 1946 both units were allotted to the California Air National Guard.

² Unit yearbook. *144 Air Defense Wing, 1943-1969*.