

## 186 AIR REFUELING WING



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

186 Tactical Reconnaissance Group constituted and allotted to the Air National Guard, 11 Sep 1962

Activated and extended federal recognition, 15 Oct 1962

Redesignated 186 Air Refueling Group, 13 Apr 1992

Redesignated 186 Air Refueling Wing, 16 Oct 1995

### STATIONS

Key Field ANGB, Meridian, MS

### ASSIGNMENTS

Mississippi Air National Guard

### WEAPON SYSTEMS

#### Mission Aircraft

O-38, 1939

O-47, 1940

BC-1, 1940

O-52, 1941

O-43, 1942

P-39, 1942

B-25, 1942

TIGER MOTH, 1942

O-49, 1942  
P-51, 1942  
A-20, 1942  
SPITFIRE MK-V, 1942  
A-26, 1946  
P-47, 1946  
T-33, 1954  
RP-80, 1954  
RF-84, 1956  
RF-101, 1969  
C-131, 1975  
RF-4, 1979  
KC-135, 1992

### **Support Aircraft**

#### **COMMANDERS**

Col Sam Forbert, Jr. #1970  
Col Biffle O. Pittman, 1 Mar 1978  
LTC John C. Wellons, Jr. #1981  
Col Roger B. Howell  
Col Frederick D. Feinstein, 1990  
Col Erik Hearon, #2004  
Col James E. White #2006  
Col Franklin Chalk, Feb 2007

#### **HONORS**

##### **Service Streamers**

##### **Campaign Streamers**

##### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

##### **Decorations**

##### **EMBLEM**



The twenty white stars represent Mississippi, the 20th state to join the Union; the earth on a field of red, the earth representing the worldwide mission of the 186th and Air Force, red symbolizing the strength, courage and zeal of the unit; blue waters with white meridians and continents, blue representing the calm seas, and white symbolizing the purity of faith that is the goal of all U.S. Military Forces; gold lettering against a banner of Air Force blue, the gold symbolizing the sun, honor and wisdom, and the blue representing justice, loyalty, thinking and truth; the white element around the entire border signifying perfection, and truth; and the white encompassing the entire shield represents the wisdom that surrounds the unit.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 186th Tactical Reconnaissance Group at Key Field in Meridian officially became the 186th Air Refueling Group on 1 April 1992. The unit converted from 18 RF-4C with a mission of aerial reconnaissance to 10 KC-135R with an air-to-air refueling mission. Upon conversion, the 186th changed from a unit gained by the Tactical Air Command (TAC) to a Strategic Air Command (SAC) gained unit.

The 186th Tactical Reconnaissance Group continued to provide aerial photography in support of higher headquarters directives until late in calendar year 1991. On 14 December 1991, the

final RF-4C assigned to the Meridian unit was transferred to the California Air National Guard. On January 8, 1992, the first KC-135R arrived at Key Field to be used for maintenance training in the new mission that would be assigned to the unit. On 1 April, the unit officially became the 186th Air Refueling Group. Within a week, the 186th had already performed its first operational mission; that of refueling a C-141B operated by the 172nd Airlift Group in Jackson.

### **28 Aug 2005**

The 186th Air Refueling Wing, Mississippi ANG, evacuated seven of its ten assigned KC-135R to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma and Carswell AFB, Texas. Its remaining three aircraft were placed in the base hangar at Key Field, Mississippi. The unit's lone RC-26B evacuated to Meecham Field, Ft Worth, Texas.

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour and the state's Congressional delegation announced Sept. 16 that the Air Force plans to put a temporary mission qualification training detachment for the MC-12 aircraft with the Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing. The Key Field base should receive up to seven of the intelligence-surveillance-reconnaissance platform beginning in January 2009. Sen. Thad Cochran (R) said the training would be "the first of its kind" and would do much to support war on terror operations. The 186th ARW, slated to lose its KC-135 under BRAC 2005, will run the training program alongside its refueling mission through 2011. Sen. Roger Wicker (R) said, "This bridge mission will ensure the pilots, flight crews, and maintenance personnel at Key Field will be able to stay in Meridian and maintain their high level of proficiency." Cong. Chip Pickering acknowledged the hard work of the unit and local and state leaders in assuring "commitments ... to preserve a flying mission for the 186th ... are kept."

The Air Force has turned over the first of its new Liberty Project Aircraft to the Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing at Key Field in Meridian. The plan unveiled last fall will place seven of the intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance modified Hawker Beechcraft with the 186th ARW, which is slated to lose its KC-135 under BRAC 2005. The unit, which also has about a dozen years experience operating RC-26 counterdrug mission aircraft, temporarily will run an MC-12 mission qualification detachment. The Air Force plans to field the MC-12W manned ISR aircraft in Southwest Asia beginning this month and expects to have all 37 LPA aircraft in hand by year's end. Under Project Liberty, the service sought a readily available commercial aircraft that could be quickly modified for the ISR mission to help fill increasing requirements for battlefield intelligence.

The Mississippi Air National Guard's 186th Air Refueling Wing received the first of eight KC-135s that the unit expects to have in place by the end of September, according to local press reports. The KC-135 touched down on June 10 at the wing's home at Key Field ANG Base in Meridian, reported the Meridian Star. This KC-135 is one of the six that the Ohio Air Guard's 121st ARW at Rickenbacker ANG Base is shedding to help constitute the Mississippi wing's full eight-aircraft complement, according to the Ohio wing's Facebook page. The Ohio unit will continue to operate a fleet of 12 KC-135s. The KC-135 mission is returning to Key Field. KC-135s used to

operate there, but BRAC 2005 stripped the base of its tanker role. In mid-2011, Key Field gained the C-27J schoolhouse. With the Air Force's divestiture of the C-27J fleet, a void emerged once again that the return of the tankers will fill. KC-135 conversion training for Key Field pilots and maintainers has already begun, according to a base release 2013

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.