

## 306<sup>th</sup> AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

606<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 15 Feb 1943

Activated, 1 Mar 1943

Disbanded, 31 Mar 1944

306<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, Medium constituted, 17 Aug 1950

Activated, 1 Sep 1950

Redesignated 306<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy, 1 Jul 1962

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1973

Activated, 1 Oct 1984

606<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) and 306<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy, consolidated  
19 Sep 1985. Consolidated squadron retains designation of the active unit: 306<sup>th</sup> Air  
Refueling Squadron, Heavy

Inactivated, 1 Aug 1994

#### STATIONS

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Mar 1943

Gowen Field, ID, 10 Apr 1943

Wendover Field, UT, 27 Mar 1943

March Field, CA, 1 Dec 1943-31 Mar 1944  
McCoy AFB, FL,  
Altus AFB, OK, 1 Sep 1950-1 Jul 1962

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Mildenhall England, 11 Jun 1953-7 Sep 1953

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

399<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 1Mar 1943-31 Mar 1944  
306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing (Medium), May 51

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24, 1943-1944  
KC-97E  
KC-97F  
KC-97G  
KC-135A

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Homer C. Bell, #1954  
LTC David M. Greist

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

American Theater

#### **Campaign Streamers**

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

#### **Decorations**

#### **EMBLEM**



## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Operational training unit until Aug 1943; replacement training, Aug 1943-Mar 1944.

From September 1950 to August 1951 provided combat ready crew training for SAC B-29 and B-50 aircrews. Began receiving KC-97 in August 1951. For the next several months trained to become proficient in air refueling operations. From mid-1952 until early 1963, maintained combat ready status through constant training in both simulated and real air refueling missions. Refueled the first mass movement of an entire B-47 wing to the United Kingdom in June 1953. Deployed to Mildenhall RAF Station, England, Jun-Sep 1953; Sidi Slimane AB, French Morocco, Nov-Dec 1954; Ben Guerir AB, French Morocco, Nov 1955-Jan 1956, Oct-Dec 1956, and Oct 1957; Thule AB, Greenland, Jul-Oct 1958; and Lajes AB, Azores, Apr-Jul 1961.

The 306th Air Refueling Squadron, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, was the first unit to begin equipping with the KC-97. Its first aircraft, a KC-97E (Serial Number 51-183), was delivered on 14 July. Outfitted with a flying boom and loaded with fuel tanks, the four-engine, propeller-driven KC-97 could fly fast enough to match the minimum speed of the B-47. It transformed the B-47 into an intercontinental bomber. Each KC-97 squadron was authorized 20 aircraft. 1951

1953 Operation Longstride and the Fourth Mackay Trophy - Swift deployment of F-84Gs across the Atlantic became equally important to SAC operations, particularly since the F-84 had been converted to a fighter-bomber with a nuclear bombing capability. Appropriately nicknamed Operation Longstride, the first mass nonstop fighter flight over the Atlantic was a dual mission conducted by the 31st and 508th Strategic Fighter Wings, located at Turner Air Force Base, Georgia. These wings were assigned to the 40th Air Division. The first phase of Operation

Longstride began at 0743 ZULU time, on 20 August, when Colonel David C. Schilling, 31st Wing Commander, led a flight of nine F-84s off the runway at Turner Air Force Base. One Thunderjet spare accompanied the flight as far as Savannah, Georgia, and then returned home, while the main flight of eight continued on its way to North Africa. Three in-flight refuelings by KC-97 aircraft were required to get the fighters across the Atlantic. Operating out of Kindley Air Force Base, Bermuda, KC-97s of the 305th Air Refueling Squadron furnished the first two refuelings, while KC-97s of the 26th Air Refueling Squadron positioned at Lajes Air Force Base, Azores, provided the third refueling. The formation of eight landed at Nouasseur Air Base, French Morocco, approximately 10 hours and 20 minutes after leaving Turner. After spending a few days at Lakenheath RAF Station, England, the flight returned to Turner on 2 September. Within a few minutes after Colonel Schilling's flight was on its way to North Africa, the second phase of Operation Longstride began. This flight of 20 Thunderjets was led by Colonel Thayer S. Olds, 40th Air Division Commander, and Colonel Cy Wilson, 508th Wing Commander. Using the North Atlantic route, the 508th's fighters were also refueled three times, once over Boston by KB-29 of the 100th Air Refueling Squadron, once near Labrador by KC-97s of the 26th Air Refueling Squadron, and once near Iceland by KC-97s of the 306th Air Refueling Squadron, which was TDY to England. The main flight of 17 landed at Lakenheath RAF Station, England, approximately 11 hours and 20 minutes after leaving Turner. Three Thunderjets were held over one day at Keflavik before completing the flight. The flight returned to Turner on 12 September.

1958 306 Redeployed From Operation Black Duck At Thule, Greenland. Undertook Deployment Of 306 Air Refueling Squadron To Thule, Greenland, Operation Black Duck.

Aircraft Of 306 AREFS deployed to Lajes Field, Azores, for Operation Short Punt. 1961

306 AREFS was transferred to McCoy AFB, FL to be reequipped with KC-135. 1962

Aircrew training In 306 AREFS equipped with KC-135 suffered during the Cuban Crisis. 1962

KC-135 of 306 AREFS supported Operation Desert Strike 1964

Provided important supporting role in Vietnam including unloading of nearly 200 million pounds of fuel. 1967

Furnished aircraft and crews to SAC units flying combat and combat support missions in the Far East and Southeast Asia during the Vietnam conflict. Transferred its last KC-135 on 31 Aug 1973 and inactivated on 30 Sep 1973.

306th ARS was activated as one of the refueling squadrons of the 340th Air Refueling Wing, Heavy, Altus AFB, Okla, on 1 Oct 1984.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *306 Bombardment Wing, M, 1954*. Army and Navy Publishing Co., Baton Rouge, LA. 1954.

Unit yearbook. *306 Bombardment Wing, Heavy, McCoy AFB, FL. @1964*.