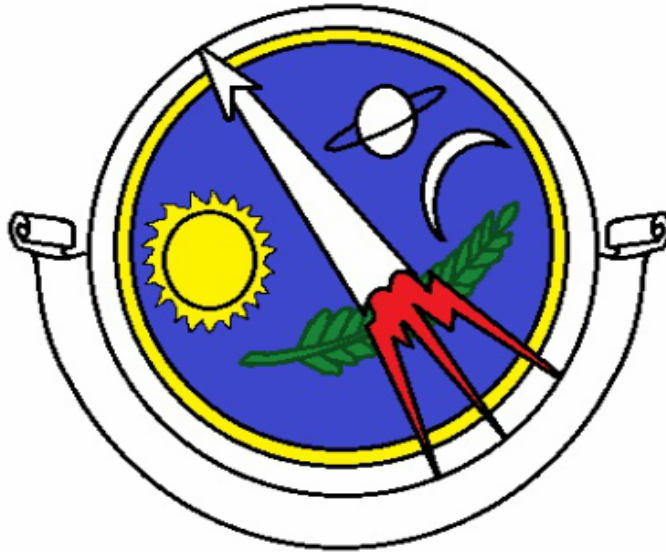


## 548 STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

548 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 25 Nov 1942

Activated, 1 Dec 1942

Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945

Redesignated 548 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 28 Jan 1947

Activated in the reserve, 27 Feb 1947

Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949

Redesignated 548 Strategic Missile Squadron (ICBM-Atlas) and activated, 22 Jan 1960

Organized, 1 Jul 1960

Inactivated, 25 Mar 1965

#### STATIONS

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Dec 1942

El Paso, TX, 4 Jan 1943

Geiger Field, WA, 1 Feb 1943

Great Falls AAB, MT, 11 Apr-7 Jun 1943

Great Ashfield, England, 29 Jun 1943-6 Aug 1945

Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 14-28 Aug 1945

Selfridge Field, MI, 27 Feb 1947-27 Jun 1947

Forbes AFB, KS, 1 Jul 1960

#### ASSIGNMENTS

385 Bombardment Group, 1 Dec 1942-28 Aug 1945

Second Air Force, 27 Feb 1947  
Tenth Air Force, 1 Jul 1948  
First Air Force, 15 Aug 1948  
Tenth Air Force, 1 Dec 1948-27 Jun 1949  
Strategic Air Command, 22 Jan 1960  
21 Air (later Strategic Aerospace) Division, 1 Jul 1960

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1942-1945  
SM-65E Atlas, 1960–1964

### **COMMANDERS**

Lt Col Homer J. Andre

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

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

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
Germany, 17 Aug 1943  
Zwickau, Germany, 12 May 1944

### **EMBLEM**



548 Bombardment Squadron emblem

548 Strategic Missile Squadron emblem: On an AF blue disc edged AF golden yellow, within a wide white border, a green olive branch originating in dexter base arched to sinister surmounted by a stylized white missile in bendwise upward flight, its nose invading the border, emitting three red lightning flashes radiant, from its tail into the border; all between in chief a planet and a decrescent moon and in dexter an AF golden yellow sun. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem represents "Universal Peace through Eternal Vigilance." The sun, moon, and planet indicate the universe and the unit's night and day vigilance. The olive branch, symbol of peace, proclaims our purpose, while the missile and lightning bolts signify rapid retaliatory capability. The emblem displays the Air Force Colors, ultramarine blue and golden yellow and the national colors, red, white, and blue. (Approved, 16 April 1962)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Combat in ETO, 17 Jul 1943-20 Apr 1945.

Turnover to SAC, 10 Oct 1961

Operational, 16 Oct 1961

First ICBM off alert, 4 Jan 1965

Last ICBM shipped OUT, 8 Feb 1965

548 Strategic Missile Squadron Selected For Operation Screw Top (Determine Feasibility Of Helicopter Support At Strategic Air Command Missile Sites). U-6A Aircraft Training Began; U-6A Aircraft To Be Used To Support Missile Sites Instead Of H-19B And SH-19 Helicopters.

In October 1958, Topeka received news that Forbes AFB would support Atlas E missile sites to be constructed in the surrounding area. The Corps of Engineers Kansas City District managed construction of the nine "coffins" where the missiles would be stored horizontally. Although Forbes was slated to have three sites with three missiles at each site, in February 1959, the Air

Force directed that each missile be placed at an individual launch site, These sites were situated at or near Valley Falls, Dover, Waverly, Osage City, Delia, Wamego, Overbrook, Holton, and Bushong. Construction officially began on June 9, 1959, when Kansas Governor George Docking drove a silver nail into a construction form.

Site construction was split between two firms, with one firm responsible for work at three sites and the other for work at the other six. There were difficulties encountered due to some 519 modifications made during construction. One modification concerned the propellant loading system. Prefabricated in Pittsburgh by Blaw-Knox Manufacturing for Atlas E sites at Vandenberg AFB, California; Warren AFB, Wyoming; Fairchild AFB, Washington; and Forbes AFB, the system components were to arrive on skids bolted together. Unfortunately the skids often arrived late and testing revealed system defects that took time to correct.

Labor-management problems caused occasional setbacks in construction. During the project there were 22 work stoppages, most of which were quickly resolved. In October and November 1960, a long work stoppage occurred due to a work assignment dispute between the hoisting engineers and the electrical workers. The problem was resolved after the National Labor Relations Board issued a restraining order.

There were 25 lost-time accidents during construction, including two fatalities that were electricity-related. One minor disturbance occurred at one of the sites when student pickets from McPherson College arrived to protest the deployment of ICBMs.

Despite the labor problems and student pickets, the project continued on schedule. On July 1, 1960, the 548 Strategic Missile Squadron stood up. Nearly 6 months later, on January 24, 1961, the first Atlas missile arrived at Forbes. By October, all nine sites had their Atlas E missiles. The Forbes sites were completed 3 weeks ahead of schedule.

On October 16, 1961, Air Force Ballistic Missile Activation Chief, Maj. Gen. Gerrity turned over operational control of the sites to Second Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. John D. Ryan. In the ensuing press conference the two generals urged Kansans to become interested in constructing fallout shelters as an insurance policy that could enhance deterrence.

As a result of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's May 1964 directive accelerating the decommissioning of Atlas and Titan I missile bases, the 548 Strategic Missile Squadron was inactivated on March 25, 1965.

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USAF Unit Histories  
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#### Sources

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