

## 1606 AIR BASE WING



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

1606 Air Base Wing established and activated, 1 Jul 1977  
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1991

### STATIONS

Kirtland AFB, NM, 1 Jul 1977

### ASSIGNMENTS

Twenty-Second Air Force, 1 Jul 1977  
Twenty-Third Air Force, 1 Oct 1983  
Twenty-Second Air Force, 22 May 1990

### COMMANDERS

Col Archer L. Durham, 1 Jul 1977  
Col Jack W. Sheppard, 21 Feb 1979  
Col James N. Hockney, 22 Jun 1981  
Col Robert E. Purves, 7 May 1982  
Col Gary H. Mears, 7 Jun 1982  
Col David W. Scott, 1 Jul 1983  
Col Charles G. Thomas, 3 Jun 1985  
Col Thomas W. Sullivan, 22 Jul 1988

Col Edward S. Brannum, 14 Jun 1990

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

On July 1, 1977, the base once again changed hands as the 1606th Air Base Wing was created when Military Airlift Command took over responsibility for operating Kirtland AFB from Air Force Systems Command.

On October 1, 1991, the 1606th Air Base Wing and 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing merged into one "super" wing called the 542nd Crew Training Wing.

Military Airlift Command took control of the base and 1606th Air Base Wing activated for host base responsibilities. 01 Jul1977

Shortly thereafter, during early 1976, the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (of Military Airlift Command) moved its 1550th Aircrew Training and Test Wing (ATIW) to Kirtland from Hill Air Force Base, Utah. That unit brought increased flying activity to the base, since it was responsible for all the Air Force's advanced helicopter training, using UH1, H-3, and H-53 aircraft. In addition, the 1550 ATTW conducts fixed-wing rescue and recovery training in the C-130 Hercules aircraft and is responsible for testing new helicopter systems and techniques. The Air Force Contract Management Division retained control of Kirtland for slightly over a year after its asst111ption on April 1, 1976. The Division's parent organization, Air Force Systems Command, desired to be relieved of responsibility for the base, and negotiations took place within the Air Force to decide which major command would assume control of Kirtland. With the 1550 ATIW, a Military Airlift Command unit already at Kirtland and engaged in active operations, that command seemed to the Air Staff like a reasonable choice. Accordingly, on July 1, 1977, Military Airlift Command (MAC) assumed control of Kirtland AFB and retains it to the present time. To discharge its base host responsibilities at Kirtland, MAC activated the 1606th Air Base Wing (AB\X7), whose commander is also the base commander. The 1606 ABW generally took over the 4900 ABW operational and personnel structure, modifying both to meet

changes instituted by Military Airlift Command. Most significant among those changes have been improvement of base living conditions, in order to enhance personnel retention, and strengthening of security measures. 1606 ABW officials began a concentrated renovation program for base family housing units during 1977, and that program has continued to the point where excellent, modernized quarters are available to any qualified military member. Transient and visitor facilities along with those for unaccompanied personnel, received similar treatment in an effort to upgrade quality of life on Kirtland Air Force Base. With an increasing MAC emphasis on protection of special aerospace resources, security of the Manzano area is of prime importance to Kirtland officials. That importance is reflected in increased numbers of security personnel, modern equipment and techniques, as well as the previously mentioned upgrading of the base's security police organization to Group status during 1979 the only Air Force Security Police unit so designated. Kirtland's preparedness to support worldwide military activities is indicated by an emphasis on mobility training and exercises. The New Mexico Air National Guard's crack 150th Tactical Fighter Group, an important base tenant unit, is part of the nation's recently developed Mobile Response Force concept, and other Kirtland units support that effort as well.

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USAF Unit Histories  
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Sources  
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.