

4504 MISSILE TRAINING WING (TACTICAL)



MISSION

LINEAGE

4504 Tactical Missile Wing (Training) organized, 18 Oct 1956
Redesignated 4504 Missile Training Wing (Tactical), 1 Jul 1958
Inactivated, 25 Mar 1967

STATIONS

Orlando AFB, FL, 18 Oct 1956-25 Mar 1967

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Col Leon H. Berger
Col Van H. Slayden

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a shield azure, spattered with 13 stars argent, a demi-sphere issuing from base vert longitude and latitude lines of the second; above the sphere two large plumes in saltire, argent, detail of the first; over all in pale, a missile gules, fins argent, its nose to chief, entwined with an atomic symbol of two electronic orbits or and two nuclei gules; its fire exhaust streaming downward to sphere proper; the missile winged on its dexter or, all within a border of the last. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The white plumes denote the training of the groups of this wing. The earth and the background of blue, containing 13 stars, symbolize the fact that units trained by this wing may be deployed in the future throughout the world. The red missile and the atomic structure at the nose of the missile represent the armament and atomic capability of the missiles. The half wing denotes that this organization is a wing. The yellow border around the emblem encompasses the mission and capabilities of the missile units into a single structure. This denotes the mission of this wing in producing continuity in the entire operations and training of tactical missile groups. (Approved, 1 July 1957)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The Tactical Air Command created a new type of organization for crew training on October 18, 1956, when a tactical missile wing to train Matador crews, the 4504th Tactical Missile Wing (Training) was activated. The 4504th TMW was dedicated to training and was not to be deployed as a combat organization. The new combat missile units would be formed at Orlando and trained by the 4504th. As part of the process, TAC began to develop an alternate method of meeting the manpower requirements of the new missile units. By 1957, a new command structure was put in place to accommodate deployment of new combat missile units, and two new tactical missile groups were formed at Orlando, assigned to Headquarters, Ninth Air Force, Tactical Air Command.

The 4504th Tactical Missile Wing (Training) was renamed on July 1, 1958, to 4504th Missile Training Wing (Tactical), 20 and on July 1, 1959, formally established as the U.S. Air Force Tactical Missile School.

The 4504th Missile Training Wing and the USAF Tactical Missile School are one single military organization with a single training mission.

The newly renamed Missile Training Wing consisted of a Headquarters, a Student Squadron, a Training Squadron and a Support Squadron, along with two detached support sections, Detachment 1 at Holloman for the TM-76A Mace, and Detachment 2 at the Cape for the TM-61C Matador and later the TM-76B Mace. The mission of the new wing stated: The proficiency of the crew, as an entity, is the goal of the school. Crew proficiency is determined by the combined ability of the individuals to operate under alert conditions within the simulated concepts of theater operation.

Even though a full wing, the 4504th was a tenant to the 1360th Air Base Group, MATS (Military Air Transport Service). Detachment 1, 4504th Support Squadron, was assigned to Holloman AFB, New Mexico, to support missile launch crew training. Detachment 2 of the 4504th Support Squadron at Cape Canaveral was physically located on the south side of the Port Canaveral

The 4504th Missile Training Wing had 1500 assigned personnel in September 1959, and had served as the home of the Tactical Missile School since 1956.

The 4504th MTW was inactivated ten days later on March 25, 1967, and the facility was eventually turned over to the U.S Navy.

The last tactical missile unit produced by pipeline through the 4504th MTW was also deployed to the Far East, the 498th Tactical Missile Group at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. While the 498th TMG was manned by crews sent from the 4504th, the 498th and its three squadrons, the 873rd and 874th Tactical Missile Squadrons, and the 498th Missile Maintenance Squadron, were activated on Okinawa as part of the 313th Air Division, PACAF February 8, 1961

Training of the new Mace crews was handled by the Tactical Air Command at the newly renamed 4504th Missile Training Wing at Orlando AFB before the crews were deployed to Germany. Some Matador crews would be retained in the 38th TMW, but only enough to man the aging missiles as they were phased out of service. Some of the crews with more time remaining on their overseas tour of duty would be reassigned to other squadrons, mostly the 71st TMS at Bitburg that would be the last unit to phase out the Matador.

The 4504th Missile Training Wing in Orlando was called upon for support as well. The 4504th MTW supplied personnel to fill many slots at the nearby McCoy Air Force Base, home to a Strategic Air Command B-52 wing during the tumultuous alert period.

With the deactivation of the MGM-13A program, Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, decided the 4504th Missile Training Wing at Orlando was no longer required. Training for the Mace B crews would be merged with the 3415th Technical Training Center at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver, Colorado, and continue until 1969. In October 1966, the 4504th Missile Training Wing was began shutting down and the MGM-13A facilities were closed. The remaining CGM-13B missiles and school components were shipped to Lowry where they were integrated into the Air Training Command's curriculum for missile systems training. Orlando Air Force Base was closed by the host Military Airlift Command and turned over to the U.S. Navy as a training center.



Col Van H. Slayden

Tactical missile crews stationed on the Free World perimeters in Germany, Formosa and Korea are kept supplied with professionally trained launch teams by one Air Force unit, the 4504th Missile Training Wing headquartered at Orlando Air Force Base since October 1956.

The 1500 men of the 4504th, a unit of the Tactical Air Command, 9th Air Force, comprise the framing center for the Air Force's world-wide tactical missile concept. Graduates from Air Force schools specializing in electronics, mechanics and other skills are sent here to be welded into competent combat ready assembly, launch and guidance teams for the operational TM-61 Matador and new TM-76 Mace missiles. Following the training program here, teams are deployed to overseas operational locations where missiles stand in constant readiness, just a few minutes of final countdown remaining, to strike back at any aggressor. Procedures of transporting, assembling and countdown on the Matador and Mace are constantly being practiced by the crews in training behind the closely guarded fences of the two Missile Wing compounds at OAFB.

The big birds arrive by road, rail or air from the manufacturer, the Martin Baltimore Company, and the assembly teams get their first practice. Assembled and mounted on the giant trailers which double as zero-length launch pads, and accompanied by the necessary accessory vans for final field assembly and guidance, the missiles are ready for the simulated launch activities leading up to the real blast off at Cape Canaveral, or Holloman AFB. New Mexico Launch crews practice their countdown procedures with the whine of accessory engines mingling with the roar of the missiles' jet engines run up to nearly full power on the launch trucks. Meanwhile, in the hangars, assembly crews memorize every bolt, each plug, every fuel and hydraulic connection vital to the missile's operation under combat conditions.

Guidance crews are busy too, tracking Tactical Air Command F-100s, B-57s and T-33s on

simulated missile runs to designated targets culminating the weeks of training of the three crews, the entire team moves to the Air Force Missile Test Center at Cape Canaveral for actual launchings. There, the missiles are guided over the Atlantic Ocean and "dumped" on pinpointed targets. After Successful launchings, the crews are ready for overseas assignment.

Mainstay of the tactical missile program and the missile involved in the majority of the training at OAFB is the Matador. It is powered by a J-33 jet engine at speeds in excess of 650 miles per hour About the same size as a jet fighter, the nuclear warhead carrying missile is noted for its mobility, being transportable into forward battle zones on the special launch trailers; Its reliability and accurate guidance system which is ground controlled.

In the summer of 1958, the new Mace, which had been under development by TAC for some time, was introduced to the 4504th. The first operational crews began training with the big brother to the Matador to ready the all weather, instantaneous retaliatory missile for overseas operation.

Slightly larger than the Matador, the Mace operates on a self-contained guidance system which decreases its vulnerability and enables it to fly at extremely low altitudes avoiding enemy radar nets.

Its mobility is increased by the MM-1 "Terracruiser" carriers whose huge, low pressure tires can wallow their way through mud, snow or desert sand.

Operating in its vital specialized area, the 4505th Missile Training Wing activities support a weapons system with a potential exceeding the total destructive effects of all World War II bombing efforts.



Training in the assembly of the TM-61 Matador and TM-76 Mace tactical guided missiles is a part of the program at the Missile Training Wing readying missile crews for 24 Hour duty on the frontiers of the free world's defenses.



Ready and rearin' to go. The TM-76 Mace guided missile perched atop an MM-1 Terracruiser vehicle that can transport through desert, sand, swamp and snow to front line combat positions

for low level atomic penetration of an enemy's defense.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 26 Mar 2022
Updated:

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