

53 WEAPONS EVALUATION GROUP



MISSION

The 53 Weapons Evaluation Group, located at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla., conducts operations at Tyndall, Eglin, and Holloman Air Force Bases. This group has a variety of missions, including conducting the U.S. Air Force Air-to-Air Weapon System Evaluation Program, known as Combat Archer, and the U.S. Air Force Air-to-Ground Weapon System Evaluation Program, known as Combat Hammer. These programs evaluate “man, munition, and machine,” while providing invaluable training to fighter and bomber aircrews by allowing them to launch or drop live weapons at realistic targets.

In addition, the group is the U.S. Air Force’s sole operator of full- and sub-scale aerial targets for developmental, operational, and follow-on test and evaluation conducted by the U.S. Air Force and other joint and foreign services.

The group conducts the USAF air-to-air Weapon System Evaluation Program, known as Combat Archer, under COMACC Plan 85, and the USAF air-to-ground WSEP, known as Combat Hammer, under COMACC Plan 90. It also supports Weapons Instructor Course air-to-air formal training syllabi under COMACC Plan 92.

The 53d WEG is comprised of five squadrons and two detachments: the 53d Test Support Squadron, the 81st Range Control Squadron, the 82d Aerial Targets Squadron, and the 83d Fighter Weapons Squadron, all located at Tyndall; the 86th Fighter Weapons Squadron, located at Eglin; Detachment 1, 82 ATRS, located at Holloman Air Force Base, NM, and Detachment 1, 86 FWS located at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

LINEAGE

475 Fighter Group (Twin-Engine) Established, 7 May 1943

Activated, 14 May 1943
Redesignated 475 Fighter Group, Twin-Engine, 20 Aug 1943
Redesignated 475 Fighter Group, 29 Dec 1943
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1949
Redesignated 475 Fighter Group (Air Defense), 20 Jun 1955
Activated, 18 Aug 1955
Inactivated, 2 Jan 1958
Redesignated 475th Weapons Evaluation Group, 14 Oct 1983
Activated, 15 Oct 1983
Inactivated, 20 Nov 1998

53 Weapons Evaluation Group established, 1 Nov 1998
Activated, 20 Nov 1998

475 Weapons Evaluation Group and 53 Weapons Evaluation Group consolidated, 25 Jul 2000
Consolidated Group designated 53 Weapons Evaluation Group

STATIONS

Amberley Field, Australia, 14 May 1943
Dobodura, New Guinea, 14 Aug 1943
Nadzab, New Guinea, 24 Mar 1944
Hollandia, New Guinea, 15 May 1944
Biak, 14 Jul 1944
Dulag, Leyte, 28 Oct 1944
San Jose, Mindoro, 5 Feb 1945
Clark Field, Luzon, 28 Feb 1945
Lingayen, Luzon, 20 Apr 1945
Ie Shima, Japan, 8 Aug 1945
Kimpo, South Korea, 23 Sep 1945
Itazuke, Japan, 28 Aug 1948
Ashiya, Japan, 25 Mar-1 Apr 1949
Minneapolis-St Paul IAP, MN, 18 Aug 1955-2 Jan 1958
Tyndall AFB, FL, 15 Oct 1983-20 Nov 1998
Tyndall AFB, FL, 20 Nov 1998

ASSIGNMENTS

V Fighter Command, 14 May 1943
85 Fighter Wing, 16 Jun 1944
V Fighter Command, 18 May 1945
308 Bombardment Wing, 1 Feb 1946
Fifth Air Force, 22 Mar 1947
475 Fighter Wing, 18 Aug 1948-1 Apr 1949
31 Air Division (Defense), 18 Aug 1955-2 Jan 1958
USAF Air Defense Weapons Center, 15 Oct 1983

USAF Tactical Air Warfare Center (later, USAF Air Warfare Center; 53 Wing), 23 Jan 1991-20
Nov 1998
53 Wing, 20 Nov 1998

ATTACHMENTS

First Air Task Force, 14 Aug 1943-31 Jan 1944
308 Bombardment Wing, 1 Feb-24 Mar 1944
310 Bombardment Wing, 14 May-16 Jun 1944
309 Bombardment Wing, 29 May-Aug 1945
308 Bombardment Wing, 23 Sep 1945-31 Jan 1946

WEAPON SYSTEMS

P-38, 1943-1946
P-51, 1946-1949
C-47, 1947-1948
C-46, 1948
F-89, 1955-1958
QF-102, 1983-1984
QF-100, 1983-1993
QF-106, 1991-1996
F-15, 1994-1998, 1998
F-117, 1993-1998, 1998-2006
QF-4, 1996-1998, 1998
Subscale drones, 1983-1998, 1998
HH-60, 1997-1998, 1998
MQ-9, 2008

COMMANDERS

None (not manned), 14-20 May 1943
Lt Col George W. Prentice, 21 May 1943
Col Charles H. MacDonald, 27 Nov 1943
Lt Col Meryl M. Smith, 4 Aug 1944
Col Charles H. MacDonald, 13 Oct 1944
Lt Col John S. Loisel, 15 Jul 1945
Col Henry G. Thorne Jr., 18 Apr 1946
Maj Dean W. Dutrack, 7 Jul 1946
Col Ashley B. Packard, 20 Jul 1946
Col Leland S. Stranathan, 22 Mar 1947
Col Carl W. Pyle, 7 Jun 1947
Col William O. Moore, 19 Sep 1947
Lt Col Woodrow W. Ramsey, 28 Aug 1948
Lt Col Richard C. Banbury, 25 Mar-1 Apr 1949
Col David Gould, 18 Aug 1955-2 Jan 1958
Col Thomas J. Coady, 15 Oct 1983

Col Leonard C. Ekman, 14 Sep 1984
Col John A. Judd, 24 Jul 1987
Col William K. Matthews, 16 Nov 1988
Col Clarence R. Anderegg, 30 Aug 1991
Col William A. Scott, 22 Apr 1994
Col Stephen J. Miller, 20 Jun 1996
Col Jonathan S. Norwood, 22 Jun 1998
Col Stephen McNamara, 22 Feb 2000
Col Jack I. Gregory Jr., 31 Aug 2001
Col Derek S. Hess, 14 Jul 2003
Col Michael Winslow, 12 Aug 2005
Col David Hlatky, 31 Jul 2007
Col Michael A. MacWilliam, 9 Sep 2008
Col Scott Ward, #2014
Col Lance Wilkins

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater
China Defensive
New Guinea
Bismarck Archipelago
Western Pacific
Leyte
Luzon
China Offensive
Southern Philippines

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
New Guinea, 18 and 21 Aug 1943
New Guinea, 15 and 17 Oct 1943
Philippine Islands, 25 Oct-25 Dec 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Nov 1986-31 Oct 1988
1 Jan 1994-31 May 1995
1 Jun 1998-31 May 2000

1 Jun 2002-31 May 2004
1 Jun 2004-31 May 2006

Air Force Organizational Excellence Award
1 Jan 1992-31 Dec 1993

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Combat in Asiatic-Pacific Theater, 1943-1945. Served in Korea, Sep 1945-1948 as part of the Far East Air Forces occupation force.

Air defense in the United States 1955-1958.

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