

126th AIR REFUELING GROUP

LINEAGE

344th Bombardment Group (Medium) constituted, 31 Aug 1942
Activated, 8 Sep 1942
Redesignated 344th Bombardment Group (Light), Dec 1945
Inactivated, 31 Mar 1946
Redesignated 126th Bombardment Group (Light) Allotted to ANG, 24 May 1946
Extended federal recognition, 29 Jun 1947
Redesignated 126th Composite Group, Nov 1950
Redesignated 126th Bombardment Group (Light), Feb 1951
Redesignated 126th Fighter Bomber Group
Redesignated 126th Air Refueling Group, 2 Jan 1962
Inactivated

STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 8 Sep 1942
Drane Field, FL, 28 Dec 1942
Hunter Field, GA 19 Dec 1943-26 Jan 1944
Stansted, England, 9 Feb 1944
Cormcilles-en-Vexin, France, 30 Sep 1944
Florennes/Juzaine, Belgium, 5 Apr 1945
Schleissheim, Germany, 15 Sep 1945-15 Feb 1946
Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb-31 Mar 1946
O'Hare Intl Aprt, IL, 1 Apr 1951
Langley AFB, VA, 25 Jul-19 Nov 1951
Bordeaux AB, France, 7 Dec 1951
Laon AB, France, 25 May 1952-1 Jan 1953
O'Hare IAP, Park Ridge, IL

ASSIGNMENTS

Ninth AF, Mar 1944
Tactical Air Command

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

KC-97L

KC-135E

Support Aircraft

COMMANDERS

LTC Jacob J Brogger, 10 Oct 1942

Col Guy L McNeil, 2 Nov 1942

Col John A Hilger, 7 Nov 1942

LTC Vernon L Stintzi, 20 Jul 1943

Maj Robert W Witty, 6 Aug 1943

Col Reginald F C Vance, 19 Sep 1943

Col Robert W Witty, 7 Nov 1944

LTC Lucius D Clay Jr, 18 Aug 1945-15 Feb 1946

Col Russell B Daniels, 1 Apr 1951

LTC Carl R Norton, 25 Jun 1951

LTC Max H Mortensen, 21 Jul 1952

Col Glen W Clark, 5 Aug 1952

LTC Max H Mortensen, 18 Nov 1952-1 Jan 1953

Maj Marrion J. Lawless, 1 May 1953

LTC Harold C. Norman, Feb 1957

Col Joseph J. Kovacs, Jan 1962

Col Warren E. Bristow, Jan 1962

Col Patrick J. Freeman, 2 Jul 1970 - 1 Aug 1974

LTC Donald J. Skoczynski, 1 Aug 1974 - 10 Dec 1974

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

American Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

France, 24-26 Jul 1944

EMBLEM

Azure, a bend nebule or, between four spears, points to base, two and two of the last, inflamed proper. (Approved, 9 Jan 1943)

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

WE WIN OR DIE

OPERATIONS

Equipped with B-26's and served as a replacement training unit. Moved to England, Jan-Feb 1944. Began operations with Ninth AF in Mar, attacking airfields, missile sites, marshalling yards, submarine shelters, coastal defenses, and other targets in France, Belgium, and Holland. Beginning in May, helped prepare for the Normandy invasion by striking vital bridges in France. On D-Day 1944 attacked coastal batteries at Cherbourg; during the remainder of Jun, supported the drive that resulted in the seizure of the Cotentin Peninsula. Bombed defended positions to assist British forces in the area of Caen. Received a DUG for three-day action against the enemy, 24-26 Jul 1944, when the group struck troop concentrations, supply dumps, a bridge, and a railroad viaduct to assist advancing ground forces at St Lo. Knocked out bridges to hinder the enemy's withdrawal through the Falaise gap, and bombed vessels and strong points at Brest, Aug-Sep 1944. Attacked bridges, rail lines, fortified areas, supply dumps, and ordnance depots in Germany, Oct-Nov 1944. Supported Allied forces during the Battle of the Bulge, Dec 1944-Jan 1945, and continued to strike such targets as supply points, communications centers, bridges, marshalling yards, roads, and oil storage tanks until Apr 1945. Made training flights and participated in air demonstrations after the war. Moved to Germany in Sep 1945 and, as part of United States Air Forces in Europe, served with the army of occupation. Began training in A-26 but continued to use B-26 aircraft. Redesignated 344th Bombardment Group (Light) in Dec 1945. Transferred, without personnel and equipment, to the US on 15 Feb 1946

The 344th Bombardment Group (L) was re-designated as Headquarters, 126th Bombardment Group (L) and allotted to the Air National Guard, entitling it to the history, battle honors and any colors earned by the unit during any previous active service.

Headquarters, 126th Bombardment Group (L) was allotted to the State Of Illinois by the War Department, through the National Guard Bureau, and assigned to the 66th Fighter Wing. It was inspected on 29 June 1947, and Federal Recognition extended to it on 2 July 1947.

Ordered to active service on 1 Apr 1951 and assigned to Tactical Air Command. Moved to France, Nov-Dec 1951, and assigned to United States Air Forces in Europe. Used B-26's for training and maneuvers. Relieved from active duty and transferred, without personnel and equipment, to the control of ANG (IL), on 1 Jan 1953.

On 1 Jul 1961, the 126th Air Defense Group were reorganized, under 12th Air Force, Tactical Air Command (TAC), and designated as 126th Air Refueling Group (TAC), with a new mission, aerial refueling.

In January 1962, the 126th Group was officially re-designated as the 126th Air Refueling Group

(TAC) with Lt Colonel Warren E. Bristow as Commander.

On 10 December 1974, Headquarters, 126th Air Refueling Group, which had been a part of the 126th Wing since 1947, was de-activated and its personnel transferred to Wing Hq and to the newly designated 126th Combat Support Group. This was in conformance with Tactical Air Command's structure involving the elimination of Group Hq in bases where they are co-located with Wing Headquarters, such as at Chicago-O'Hare AB.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources