

1st EXPERIMENTAL GUIDED MISSILES GROUP

LINEAGE

1st Experimental Guided Missiles Group, 6 Feb 1946
Inactivated, 20 Jul 1949

STATIONS

Eglin AFB, FL, 6 Feb 1946–20 Jul 1949

ASSIGNMENTS

Army Air Forces Center, 6 Feb 1946
Army Air Forces Proving Ground Command, 8 Mar 1946
Air Proving Ground Command, 10 Jul 1946
Air Proving Ground, 20 Jan 1948–20 Jul 1949

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 1st Experimental Guided Missiles Group was formed at Eglin Air Field, Florida on 6 Feb 1946. The group was formed as a result of the Air Materiel Command's Engineering Division at Wright-Patterson AFB looking for a location to allow its contractors to launch missiles. The primary duty of

the unit was the launching and testing of the JB-2 Loon, the U.S. version of the German V-1. Developed by Germany in 1944, it was extensively tested at Eglin Field. It was planned to be used in the United States invasion of Japan (Operation Downfall), with the sudden end of the war, the JB-2 was never used in combat. It was the forerunner of the family of United States Guided Missiles.

Further missions of the unit were to determine Air Force missile requirements and review missile propulsion, guidance, and launching technologies. The contractor would be responsible for the requirements, and ultimately responsible for seeing that the project planning and development came together.

In March 1947 the Group received its first series of test projects. Though most of the Group's efforts were devoted to "on-the-job" training and providing assistance to contractors who launched those weapons, the 1st began implementing its mission, which included:

- Developing tactics and techniques for guided missile operations
- Training personnel and testing equipment used in guided missile organizations
- Developing requirements and standards for the employment of guided missiles
- Conducting functional and tactical tests of new guided missiles to determine their operational suitability

The group was also given the mission to oversee development of drone aircraft to support the Atomic Energy Commission nuclear tests. On 13 Jan 1947, the group received nationwide publicity by conducting a successful drone flight from Eglin AFB to Washington, D.C., in a simulated bombing mission. In Apr 1948, the Group deployed the QB/DB Fortresses to Eniwetok Atoll for the Operation Sandstone nuclear tests.

After Operation Sandstone, the group spent several months preparing a detachment to depart for cold weather testing of the JB-2 Loon flying bomb in Alaska in November 1948. Testing by the group of the JB-2 was performed with two versions; the wartime version with preset internal guidance and another version fitted with radar control. Testing began at Alamogordo Army Airfield, New Mexico in March 1947. Additional testing was also done at the Santa Rosa Island Range Complex, Florida, and at Wagner Field (Eglin Auxiliary Field #1) from which MB-17Gs were fitted with the JB-2 for airborne launches.

The JB-2 was used for development of missile guidance control and seeker systems, testing of telemetering and optical tracking facilities, and as a target for new surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles. The JB-2 project used the North American Aviation NATIV (North American Test Instrument Vehicle) Blockhouse and two launch ramps at Holloman: a 400ft, two-rail ramp on a 3° earth-filled slope, and a 40ft trailer ramp. The 40-foot trailer ramp was the first step toward a system which would eventually be adapted for the forthcoming Martin MGM-1 Matador, first operational surface-to-surface cruise missile built by the United States. The program at Holloman was terminated on 10 January 1949 after successful development of a radio guidance and control system that could control and even skid-land a JB-2 under the control of an airborne or ground transmitter.

The group began testing the wartime Henschel Hs 293 which was a German radio-controlled glide bomb with a rocket engine slung underneath it and was used as an anti-ship weapon. The group used the MB-17 as launch platforms. The German technology was used to develop the VB-3 Razon, VB-6

Felix and VB-13 Tarzon gliding bombs.

The Group was inactivated on July 20, 1949, and replaced by the 550th Guided Missiles Wing. The 97 officers and 523 airmen of the 1st were transferred to the 550th.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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