

6555 GUIDED MISSILES SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

6555 Guided Missile Squadron
6555 Guided Missiles Squadron

STATIONS

Patrick AFB, FL, *1951-1959*

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

EDF-86

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

On a shield azure, a missile argent, pointing upward and leaving three exhaust trails gules; all above a globe in base, land areas vert, water areas proper (light blue), edges and details argent; all between two lightning flashes argent, each having three segments in pile reversed. The shield represents a unit of the Air Research and Development Command. The blue color of the shield's field represents the vastness of space yet to be conquered by man. The silver projectile represents symbolically all phases of the present and future testing operations carried out by our squadron on missiles. Our primary purpose is research and development. The globe, with the missile well out into space, represents the great stride that has already been made in the missile research and development field. (Approved, 15 May 1957)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

The Air Force Missile Test Center's sixth wing was the 6555th Guided Missile Wing. The 6555th supervised missile launch contractor operations at the Cape, and the unit's two guided missile squadrons (the 6555th and 6556th) participated in MATADOR and LARK test launches. As launches of those winged missiles continued, the Wing gained two new units the 1st and 69th Pilotless Bomber Squadrons in October 1951 and January 1952.

The 6555th Guided Missile Group was discontinued on 7 September 1954. The 6555th Guided Missile Squadron was allowed to survive as a MATADOR research and development testing unit, and it was reassigned to AFMTC Headquarters on 7 September 1954. The 6555th Guided Missiles Squadron became the 6555th Guided Missile Group (Test and Evaluation) on 15 August 1959, and it was reassigned to the Air Force Ballistic Missile Division (without any change of station) on 21 December 1959. Concurrent with its reassignment, the Group picked up the resources of the Air Force Ballistic Missile Division's Assistant Commander for Missile Tests.

7 Sep 54 The 6555th Guided Missile Group was discontinued, but the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron survived. The Squadron became the 6555th Guided Missiles Group on 15 August 1959. The unit was redesignated the 6555th Test Wing (Development) on 21 December 1959, and it was reassigned from AFMTC to the Ballistic Missile Division.

Personnel from the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron assembled and disassembled Number 547 several times before the launch to make the most of their training experience. Checks of the controls, guidance and telemetry system were also done repeatedly. Martin representatives stood by as consultants on December 7th and provided the test equipment for the launch. Lift-off and flight were normal, but the missile did not respond properly to guidance signals, and it finally went out of control and fell into the Atlantic 15 minutes and 20 seconds after launch. The flight covered a distance of 105 miles.

One of TAC's MATADOR mobile training detachments was attached to the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron in 1954, and it was sent to Orlando Air Force Base in late November 1954 to

begin training new MATADOR squadrons.

Captain Edward B. Blount commanded the 6555th Guided Missile Group from 22 June 1954 until the unit was discontinued, whereupon he assumed command of the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron. Lieutenant Colonel Carey assumed command of the Squadron in early December 1954.

The 550th Guided Missile Wing's Holloman detachment had been activated on November 7, 1949, to train Air Force personnel on the Matador while the Glenn L. Martin Company conducted experiments on the missile and its newly developed zero-length launcher. There was very little official Air Force involvement in the Matador project at that time, and the support amounted to little more than "on-the-job training." The 4802nd Guided Missile Squadron, part of the 4800th Guided Missile Wing, was minimally involved with the Holloman launches, but within days of the Squadron's relocation to Patrick AFB in Florida, the officers and technicians presented an 81-hour orientation course on the Matador to the new hosts. The unit was redesignated as the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron as it was merged into the 6555th Guided Missile Wing. The newly renamed 6555th Guided Missile Squadron was soon involved in all Patrick AFB Matador launches.

TAC also assigned a mobile training detachment to Patrick AFB to assume crew training duties from the AFMTC. The 6555th Guided Missiles Squadron continued assisting the TAC training detachment in launching the Matadors from the Cape for several months until the Matador section at the AFMTC was closed. The TAC unit at the Cape became Detachment 2, 4504th MTW, and maintained barracks and mess facilities located directly on the south side of the Port Canaveral channel until the early 1960s.

The 6555th Guided Missile Wing at Patrick, which included the former 4802nd Guided Missile Squadron from Holloman, remained at Patrick AFB and supervised missile launch contractor operations at the Cape. The unit was later split into two squadrons designated as the 6555th Guided Missile Squadron and 6556th Guided Missile Squadron. The 6555th Guided Missile Group remained at Patrick and was little more than a squadron when the 69th PBS completed its field training in the summer of 1954.

7 December 1951 The 6555th Guided Missile Squadron at Cape Canaveral, Florida, launches Martin B-61 Matador, *GM-547*. Lift-off and flight were normal, but the missile did not respond properly to guidance signals, and it finally went out of control and fell into the Atlantic 15 minutes and 20 seconds after launch. The flight covered a distance of 105 miles.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 26 Mar 2022
Updated:

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