

6595 AEROSPACE TEST WING



MISSION

LINEAGE

6565 Test Wing (Ballistic Missiles and Space Systems) Established and activated, 20 Oct 1960
Re-designated 6565 Test Wing (Development), 1 Dec 1960
Re-designated 6595 Aerospace Test Wing, 1 Apr 1961
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1979

STATIONS

Vandenberg AFB, CA, 20 Oct 1960-1 Oct 1979

ASSIGNMENTS

Air Force Ballistic Missile Division, 20 Oct 1960
Space Systems Division, Air Force Systems Command, 1 Apr 1961
Space and Missile Test Center (SAMTEC), 1 Apr 1970-1 Oct 1979

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



Designed by SSgt Dubois M. Thomas

6595 Aerospace Test Wing emblem: On a field of aerospace, issuant from base a polar portion of the globe behind in bend and issuant from base a ballistic missile in flight crossed by the nebula of a space vehicle in polar orbit over the earth all proper, within a diminished bordure or **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the Wing and its mission. Against a background of aerospace and the polar regions of the earth a ballistic missile in flight and a space vehicle in polar orbit over the earth, represent the activation of ballistic missile operational sites and military space vehicle launch operations. The entire emblem symbolizes our mission of military evaluation of ballistic missile programs. (Approved, 18 Jan 1962)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

When the 6595th Aerospace Test Wing was inactivated, it was reformed into three groups (this one, at least, already existed-having been around since 1970), the other two being the 6595th Satellite Test Group (formerly the 6595th Space Test Group) and the 6595th Shuttle Test Group (formerly the 6595th Space Transportation Group).

The 6595th Aerospace Test Wing is primarily a research and development unit, providing field test management for most of the ICBM development and space launch program's taking place at Vandenberg. Under the command of Col. Otto R. Haney, the wing is assigned to the Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO) of the Air Force Systems Command.

In the ballistic missile program, the Wing supervises the installation, checkout and demonstration of all ICBM technical facilities, including launch silos, maintenance shops electronic equipment and technical data. It also has the responsibility for the ICBM development test launch program which validates the overall capability of the weapon system before it is turned over to the Strategic Air Command for further testing and refinement in an operational environment. After turnover, the Wing continues to support the particular ICBM program in an advisory capacity.

Every ICBM ever listed in the Air Force inventory, the entire families of Atlas, Titan and Minuteman has been flight tested by the Test Wing. Today, it is involved with a third generation-ICBM, the Minuteman III. Equally important contributions to the efficiency of our missile deterrent force are being provided by the Wing though its flight testing of new and advanced ballistic reentry systems in the ABRES program.

The Test Wing does not concentrate solely on these vital aspects of its national defense role. It is probably more constantly involved as the launch agency for the myriad assortment of space boosters which support the unmanned space projects of a variety of governmental "customers" the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Office of Aerospace Research and the Atomic Energy Commission all demand its services. As of this time, more than 50 percent of all the launches ever conducted at Vandenberg have been under the direction of the 6595th, and its operational horizon is broadening considerably. That the 6595th ATW has and will continue to accomplish its complex and diversified mission with success and efficiency is amply demonstrated by the three Outstanding Unit Citations and five Missile Safety Awards which have rewarded its efforts in the past.

The 6595th ATW traces its lineage to a small field office which was established at Cooke AFB (Vandenberg) in 1958 under the Air Force Ballistic Missile Division of the Research and Development Command. On Dec. 16 1958, it directed the SAC crews which launched the first missile from Vandenberg. Two months later, it launched a Thor-Agena booster in the first space exercise from the infant west coast aerospace center.

As ballistic missiles and space boosters soared aloft in increasing numbers, the operation at Vandenberg took on added importance and in October 1960, the field office was expanded and converted into the 6565th Test Wing (Ballistic Missiles and Space Systems). In December of that year, the parenthetical designator was changed to (Development) though the unit remained the 6565th TW.

When the Air Force Research and Development Command was restructured and redesignated the Air Force Systems Command on April 1, 1961, the Wing was reassigned to AFSC and placed under the Space Systems Division. On Nov. 1, 1961, the Wing was redesignated the 6595th Aerospace Test Wing without change of assignment to AFSC. This organizational structure remains today; although, since July 1, 1967, the Wing has been assigned to the new Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO).

The unit emblem of the 6595th ATW was approved for use by Headquarters, United States Air Force, on Jan. 18, 1962. Unlike the rather intricate imagery currently in vogue for aerospace unit emblems such as was discussed last week with the AFWTR design, the Wing's emblem reflects more the pictorial representations which were commonly employed during the early days of missilery. A huge ballistic missile and a space vehicle traverse the black background of space emphasizing the dual aspects of the Wing's aerospace mission. The globe depicts the polar regions of the earth. The ballistic missile in flight and the polar-orbiting satellite with its antenna-

like projections, represent “the activation of ballistic missile operational sites and military space vehicle launch operations.” Overall, the entire emblem symbolizes “our mission of military evaluation of ballistic missile programs.” In passing, it should be noted that the celestial bodies gracing the upper right corner are all circular in shape, not the traditional five-pointed stars depicted on some versions of this emblem.

USAF Unit Histories

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Sources

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