

## 485<sup>th</sup> TACTICAL MISSILE WING



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

485<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) constituted, 14 Sep 1943

Activated, 20 Sep 1943

Redesignated 485<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, Aug 1945

Inactivated, 4 Aug 1946

585<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Group established, 3 Aug 1956

Activated, 15 Sep 1956

Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Sep 1962

485<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Very Heavy and 585<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Group consolidated and redesignated 485<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 19 Dec 1983

Activated, 1 Aug 1984

Inactivated, 30 Apr 1989

Redesignated 485<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing, and converted to provisional status, 30 Jan 2003

#### STATIONS

Fairmont AAFld, NE, 20 Sep 1943-11 Mar 1944

Venosa, Italy, Apr 1944-15 May 1945

Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 30 May 1945

Sioux City AAB, IA, 24 Jul 1945

Smoky Hill AAFld, KS, 8 Sep 1945-4 Aug 1946

Bitburg AB, Germany, 15 Sep 1956-25 Sep 1962

Florennes Aprt (later, Florennes AB), Belgium, 1 Aug 1984-30 Apr 1989

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

Second Air Force, 20 Sep 1943

55<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 14 Mar 1944-15 May 1945

Army Service Forces, 16-29 May 1945

Second Air Force, c. 30 May 1945

Fifteenth Air Force, 31 Mar- 4 Aug 1946

701<sup>st</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 15 Sep 1956

38<sup>th</sup> Tactical Missile Wing, 18 Jun 1958-25 Sep 1962

Seventeenth Air Force, 1 Aug 1984-30 Apr 1989

Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 30 Jan 2003

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24, 1943-1945

B-29, 1945-1946

M-61, Matador 1956-1962

BGM-109, 1985-1988

### **COMMANDERS**

None (not manned), 20-26 Sep 1943

Col Walter E. Arnold Jr., 27 Sep 1943

Col John P. Tomhave, 29 Aug 1944

Col John B. Cornett, 17 Feb 1945

LTC Douglas M. Cairns, 23 Mar 1945-unkn

Unkn, May-26 Jul 1945

Maj (unkn) Payne, 27 Jul 1945

None (not manned), 9-14 Sep 1945

LTC Richard T. Lively, 6 Aug 1945

Col John W. White, 15 Sep 1945

Col Walter S. Lee, 1946-Aug 1946

Col Fred W. Vetter Jr., 30 Jun 1958

LTC Oliver M. Legg, 1 Jul 1962

Col Ernest B. Shepard, 6 Aug-25 Sep 1962



BG David C. Reed, 1 Aug 1984

Col Calvin L. Chasteen, 5 Mar 1986-30 Apr 1989

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

American Theater

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

Vienna, Austria, 26 Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

15 Sep 1956-30 Apr 1958

1 Apr 1959-30 Jan 1961

30 Jun 1986-30 Jun 1988

## EMBLEM



The 485th Tactical Missile Wing crest carries the griffin, a legendary creature which symbolizes courage, enlightenment, eternal vigilance, perseverance, strength, swiftness, valor and wisdom. The elements in his claw, the tomahawk, arrow and lightning bolt, denote weapons, controlled flight and application of power, respectively. The astral crown represents command in the air. The three stars indicate the 485th Tactical Missile Wing is the third GLCM base and also indicates the number of flights the wing will control. The olive branches represent the continual pursuit of peace, while the blue sky alludes to the Air Force's theater of operations. Blue and yellow are the Air Force colors. (Approved, 8 Aug 1984)

## MOTTO

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Trained in the US with B-24s, Sep 1943-Mar 1944. The crews received additional training at Fairmont and by early March 1944 their training was completed and they were deemed fit for combat. The 72 crews from the four squadrons began their individual overseas flights, initially flying to Brazil, with stops along the way, and then continuing the long overseas flight to Dakar, West Africa. From there they flew on to Marrakech and then to Oudna, Tunisia.

While the air echelon from the 485th was preparing to fly overseas, the ground echelon left Fairmont, Nebraska on March 11, 1944, enroute to Hampton Roads, Virginia. For the flight overseas most of the air crews replaced one crew member with other important personnel, such as a crew chief, staff officer, flight surgeon or other key person.

While about 56 of the Headquarters detachment left Hampton Roads in late March, most of the men boarded troop ships on April 2nd and began their overseas voyage.

The group began flying practice missions in Tunisia and by April 15, 1944 the crews began flying their planes to a field near Venosa, Italy.

On the night of April 20, 1944 the convoy was attacked by JU 88 torpedo bombers in the Mediterranean Sea, off the coast of Algiers. Three ships were sunk, including the liberty ship SS Paul Hamilton. This ship carried 154 officers and men from the 485th Bomb Group, most of them from the 831st Squadron. The Hamilton exploded and sank within 30 seconds and all personnel aboard were lost. The other 485th ground personnel, on various other ships in the convoy, made it safely to Italy and made their way to their new home at Venosa.

Entered combat on 10 May 1944.

Engaged primarily in long-range missions against targets in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Performed support and interdiction operations in Aug 1944, bombing bridges, harbors, and troop concentrations to aid the invasion of southern France. Hit communications lines and other targets in the Mar-Apr 1945 advance of the British Eighth Army in northern Italy.

Flew its last combat mission on 27 Apr 1945.

The 485th Bomb Group flew a total of 187 combat missions, dropped 10,550 tons of bombs on enemy installations and was credited with destroying 61 enemy aircraft, probably destroying 41 more and damaging 37 others. Fifteen additional enemy aircraft were destroyed on the ground. The 485th officially lost 59 bombers in aerial combat and 62 others in accidents or salvaged as a result of combat.

Approximately 3500 men served in the 485th bomb group in Italy. This number includes air crew (2500+) and ground staff. The 485th lost at least 475 men who were killed in combat or who died from combat-related injuries. Approximately 250 airmen became POWs. Thirteen airmen were captured, but managed to escape and return safely to Italy. At least 140 men from the group were shot down, but managed to evade capture and return safely.

Returned to US in May 1945, equipped with B-29s, and trained in very heavy bombardment until 4 Aug 1946. Became part of first tactical missile wing of the US Air Force in Sep 1956, operated TM-61 Matador missiles in Germany until Sep 1962.

Established base at Florennes, Belgium in 1984, trained and operated BGM-109, Ground Launched Cruise Missiles 1985-1988. Group contained a launch and maintenance squadron, a Communications and Guidance squadron, and a support squadron.

The mission of the 485th Tactical Missile Wing is to train personnel, maintain the weapon system and operate the Ground Launched Cruise Missile.

For Florennes Air Base's part in this deterrent. three flights consisting of launcher, launch control center and various security and support vehicles will make up the operational force. A total flight will consist of 22 vehicles and will operate and train in various locations throughout Belgium. The GLCM will be stored in hardened shelters which are specially designed to resist heavy conventional attack. Each flight will consist of a commander, four launch control officers and security and maintenance personnel.

---

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 2 Nov 2014

Updated:

#### Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Unit yearbook. *485 Tactical Missile Wing*.