

## 556 STRATEGIC MISSILE SQUADRON (ICBM-ATLAS)



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

556 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) constituted, 25 Nov 1942  
Activated, 1 Dec 1942  
Inactivated, 12 Nov 1945  
Redesignated 556 Strategic Missile Squadron (ICBM-Atlas), 22 Nov 1957  
Activated, 15 Dec 1957  
Inactivated, 16 Jul 1959  
Activated, 26 Apr 1961  
Organized, 1 Oct 1961  
Discontinued on 25 Jun 1965

### STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 1 Dec 1942  
Drane Field, FL, 12 Apr 1943  
Godman Field, KY, 13 May-10 Jun 1943  
Chipping Ongar, England, 1 Jul 1943  
Stony Cross, England, 21 Jul 1944  
Maupertuis, France, 1 Sep 1944  
Chateaudun, France, 18 Sep 1944  
Clastres, France, 4 Nov 1944  
Beek, Holland, 4 May 1945  
Rosieres-en Santerre, France, 30 May 1945-Nov 1945

Camp Kilmer, NJ, 11-12 Nov 1945  
Patrick AFB, FL, 15 Dec 1957  
Presque Isle AFB, ME, 9-16 Jul 1959  
Plattsburgh AFB, NY, 1 Oct 1961-25 Jun 1965

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

387 Bombardment Group, 1 Dec 1942-12 Nov 1945  
Strategic Air Command, 15 Dec 1957  
702 Strategic Missile Wing, 1 Apr-16 Jul 1959  
Strategic Air Command, 26 Apr 1961  
820 Air (later Strategic Aerospace) Division, 1 Oct 1961

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-26, 1942-1945  
SM-62 Snark, 1958–1959  
SM-65F Atlas, 1962–1965

### **COMMANDERS**

Lt Col Richard W. Beck

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation  
Germany, 23 Dec 1944

### **EMBLEM**



556 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) emblem, On a light blue disc, border red, piped white, a caricatured Indian red, outlined black, wearing a headdress, feathers black and white, trimmed red and yellow, head band white and orange diamonds, edged red" loincloth and moccasins yellow-orange, decorated red outlined black, carrying a tomahawk in the right hand, stone light yellow-orange bound to brown handle by deep yellow-orange thong, running down white cloud formation in sinister base, emitting speed lines white.



556 Strategic Missile Squadron (ICBM-Atlas) emblem, On an Air Force blue disc within a wide white border, fimbriated Air Force blue, an Air Force golden yellow missile in upward flight leaving a red trail arched to sinister base, fimbriated white; all between three groups of white lozenge-shaped stars, five in dexter, five in sinister chief, and six in sinister base (one of these last appearing in the missile's trail) **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the squadron and its mission. Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The emblem depicts the flight of a missile through space, following a prescribed trajectory, and star oriented" The stars are grouped to indicate the unit's numerical designation, 5,5,6. Included national colors of red, white, and blue. (Approved, 25 Apr 1962)

Designed by Capt Stafford T. Carter.

### **MOTTO**

IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS--Ready in Either Event, or Ready for Anything

### **OPERATIONS**

Combat in ETO, 31 Jul 1943-19 Apr 1945.

Headquarters SAC activated the 556 Strategic Missile Squadron (ICM-Snark) at Patrick AFB, Florida. This was SAC's first Snark and the first missile squadron. The 556 SMS was responsible for training Snark missile crews and conducting test launches of the Snark missile. 15 DEC 1957

The 556 SMS was scheduled to move to Presque Isle in July, but before this action could be taken, Headquarters SAC inactivated the squadron on 15 July 1959. This action, combined with the cancellation of the programmed activation of the 702d Missile Maintenance Squadron, left the 702d SMW in the unique position of having no subordinate units.

The 556 SMS was activated at Plattsburgh AFB, New York. It was the last Series F Atlas squadron and the last squadron in the Atlas program. The 556 SMS, SAC's first SMS, had been a Snark unit at Patrick AFB, Florida, from 15 December 1957 to 16 July 1959. 1 OCT 1961

At the same time the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was installing Bomarcbs at Dow and Otis, they constructed facilities for Snark missiles at Presque Isle Air Force Base. The first American intercontinental missile, the Snark was a weapon of the Strategic Air Command. It was a long-range, winged, pilotless missile manufactured by Northrop Aircraft. Powered by a turbo-jet engine, it was the first U.S. Long-range missile to be tested. Over sixty-seven feet long, with a diameter of fifteen feet and a wing span of forty-two feet; it had a range of about 5,000 miles. On December 31, 1958, SAC activated the 702nd Strategic Missile Wing (ICM-Snark) at Presque Isle AFB, about 25 miles south of Loring AFB, and assigned it to the 45th Air Division. The 702nd was SAC's first (and last) operational SNARK missile unit and was plagued with many problems in attaining combat-ready status. By March 15, 1960, the 556 Intercontinental Guided Missile Squadron had sufficient facilities and SNARKS to begin limited alert operations.

The Snark installation at Presque Isle, the only one constructed in the entire country consisted essentially of several assembly and maintenance buildings with nearby launcher pads from which missiles mounted on mobile launchers could be fired. Finally, after many setbacks, the 702nd Strategic Missile Wing attained full combat-ready status on February 28, 1961, only to be inactivated on June 25 due to President Kennedy's early decision to delete the SNARK weapon system from the Air Force arsenal. The Snark, was a guided missile with limited speed and capabilities, and in the rapid evolution of missile technology (i.e. ICBMs), it was outmoded almost before the Presque Isle installation was completed.

Headquarters SAC replaced the 702nd Strategic Missile Wing at Presque Isle AFB with a caretaker unit, and assigned it to the 42nd Combat Support Group at Loring AFB. On July 1, 1961, the 42nd CSG accepted all responsibility for the disposition of facilities and buildings at Presque Isle. This did not include the Flightline facilities as the City of Presque Isle had accepted the runway and several hangars on October 1, 1959. The Air Force had offered these to the city once the 75th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron had been transferred to Dow AFB, Maine, in July 1959. On December 15, 1961, the City of Presque Isle assumed responsibility for the majority of the remaining base. The Air Force disposed of \$141,000,000 in supplies and excess equipment. The SNARK missile and its components composed a large portion of this figure.

The missiles and launchers were declared obsolete and excess, disassembled and the reusable parts saved while the bulk of the missile and launcher were cut in smaller pieces and sold as scrap metal. A total of 30 SNARKS ended their very short life in this manner.

Turnover To SAC 7 Dec 1962

Operational 20 Dec 1962

First ICBM off alert 12 Mar 1965

Last ICBM off alert 10 Apr 1965

Last ICBM shipped 13 APR 1965

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USAF Unit Histories

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#### Sources

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

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.