

4201 TEST SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

4201 Test Squadron

STATIONS

Pease AFB, NH, 1 Jun 1972

Barksdale AFB, LA, 15 Sep 1974

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

In May 1971, a small test cadre was formed at Pease AFB, New Hampshire, for SAC's evaluation of the FB-111A bomber. This was SAC's first large-scale operational evaluation of a major airborne weapon system and was recognized as a complete success. In July 1972, the cadre was formed temporarily into the 4201st Test Squadron with a new mission to conduct operational test and evaluation (OT&E) of the Short Range Attack Missile (SRAM). The AGM-69A SRAM was built by the Boeing corporation. This missile was a supersonic rocket propelled short range attack missile carried internally on the FB-111, B-52, or B-1B aircraft. The SRAM was powered by a two pulse, solid propellant-fueled rocket and carried a nuclear warhead. This missile was designed as another standoff weapon to penetrate enemy defenses and strike targets, or as an aid in Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) suppression. The missile was launched in the automatic or manual mode against pre-programmed or inflight selected targets. A total of twenty missiles could be carried on a rotary launcher in the bomb bay and on external pylons.

To establish continuing capability for conducting MAJCOM-directed OT&E of strategic airborne weapon systems, the 4201st was designated as a permanent organization in July 1974. At this time, the present location of Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, was established for the squadron to conduct its mission.

The primary reasons for selecting Barksdale were its central location to other bases and the national test ranges, and to collocate with the 2nd Bombardment Wing's Non-Tactical Instrumentation Branch (2 BMW/NTI). Prior to 1983, the SRAM and joint Department of Energy (DoE)/USAF testing of denuclearized war reserve gravity weapons projects were the squadron's primary tasking, requiring a manning level of approximately 25 personnel and an annual budget of \$150,000. Then in July of 1983, OT&E management responsibility for the Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) was transferred from Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC) to the 4201st, the designated responsible test organization (RTO). The ALCM project presented enormous challenges for conducting OT&E of a long-range, technologically advanced weapon system in an operationally realistic environment. To meet these challenges, along with concurrent tasking for managing SAC's certification testing of conventional munitions and for OT&E of the Harpoon antiship missile, significant manpower and budget increases were required, to improve operating efficiency and effectiveness. Also, the 2 BMW/NT officially became a branch of the squadron in June 1984. As part of SAC's initiative to provide combat-rich histories to relatively new organizations, the 4201st was replaced by the 49th Test Squadron (49 TESTS) in July of 1986.

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