

## 36<sup>th</sup> Wing – The Pre-Guam Era

The history of the 36<sup>th</sup> Wing started with the 1 Feb 1940 activation of the 36<sup>th</sup> Pursuit group at Langley Field, VA. Initially equipped with P-36 Mohawks, the 36<sup>th</sup> moved to Losey Field, Puerto Rico where it flew anti-sub patrols over the Caribbean until 7 Dec 1941. After the attack on Pearl Harbor the group expanded its patrol to include the Panama Canal Zone.

Redesignated the 36<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group on 15 May 1942, the unit moved to Charleston, SC where it trained in bombing and aerial gunnery. In June 1943 it received new P-47 Thunderbolts. After a brief stay in New York the 36<sup>th</sup> FG arrived in Liverpool, England in April 1944. Under the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force the 36<sup>th</sup> FG flew its first combat missions on 8 May 1944 with a fighter sweep over the French coast. Subsequently, the 36<sup>th</sup> supported the D-Day landing at Normandy, spearheaded the allied advance into France, and kept pace with Lt Gen George Patton's fast-moving 3<sup>rd</sup> Army throughout the summer of 1944. During this time the group acquired a nickname -- "The Fightin' 36<sup>th</sup>." The 36<sup>th</sup> played a major role at Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge. On 10 March 1945, a P-47 from the 36<sup>th</sup> landed on an airstrip near Aachen, Germany, becoming the first American combat plane to voluntarily land in Germany since the start of the war.

In March 1946 the 36<sup>th</sup> FG, less personnel and equipment, moved to Bolling Field, Washington, DC. The group soon traveled to Howard Field, Panama where it received the F-80 Shooting Star. Because of increased tensions in Europe caused by the Soviet Berlin blockade and subsequent allied airlift the 36<sup>th</sup> was activated as the 36<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing under Col Henry Spicer (photo) on 2 July 1948. After activation as a wing the 36<sup>th</sup> received transfer notification to USAFE's 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force and a return to Europe. All of the aircraft, pilots, and most of the maintenance personnel and equipment arrived in Glasgow, Scotland on 7 Aug 1948. The aircraft were towed from the docks at RAF Renfrew where they were readied for the trip to the 36<sup>th</sup>'s new home at Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Ferry flights began on 13 Aug 1948, and all 82 F-80s were in place at "Fursty" by 20 Aug. The wing became the first US jet fighter-equipped unit stationed in Europe.



While at Furstenfeldbruck the 36<sup>th</sup> formed the "Skyblazers," USAFE's aerial demonstration team. The 36<sup>th</sup> was redesignated a Fighter-Bomber Wing in January 1950 and received F-84 Thunderjets. In November 1952 the 36<sup>th</sup> moved to Bitburg AB where it would stay until 1994. In August 1953 F-86 Sabrejets arrived at Bitburg to replace the F-84s. The 36<sup>th</sup> was redesignated a Fighter-Day Wing on 8 Aug 1954, comprised of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 53<sup>rd</sup> Fighter-Day Squadrons. The 8 July 1958 redesignation of the 36<sup>th</sup> as a Tactical Fighter Wing reflected the addition of special weapons to its conventional weapons delivery mission.



In the decades that followed at Bitburg (tail code **BT**) the 36<sup>th</sup> constantly upgraded to the Air Force's most cutting edge airframes – F-100s, F-102s, F-105s, F-4D and Es, and finally F-15s (photo). The 36<sup>th</sup> fought valiantly on the front line of the Cold War, a legacy of which all who served, and continue to serve with the 36<sup>th</sup> should be justifiably proud.

## NAFS and Divisions at AAFB

3 <sup>rd</sup> Air Division (SAC)	1 Apr 55 – 1 Jul 70
8 <sup>th</sup> Air Force (SAC)	1 Jul 70 – 1 Jan 75
3 <sup>rd</sup> Air Division (SAC)	1 Jan 75 – 1 Oct 89
13 <sup>th</sup> Air Force (PACAF)	2 Dec 91 -- 1 Mar 05

## Base Operating Units at AAFB

314 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing	17 Jan 45 – 15 Apr 46
19 <sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing	17 Aug 48 – 1 Jun 53
6319 <sup>th</sup> Air Base Wing	1 Jun 53 – 1 Apr 55
3960 <sup>th</sup> ABW/SW	1 Apr 55 – 1 Jul 70
43 <sup>rd</sup> BW/SW	1 Jul 70 – 1 Oct 89
633 <sup>rd</sup> Air Base Wing	1 Oct 89 – 1 Oct 94
36 <sup>th</sup> ABW/AEW/WG	1 Oct 94 -- Present

## 36<sup>th</sup> ABW/AEW/WG Commanders

Col Dennis R. Larsen	1 Oct 94 – 7 Aug 95
Col John M. Deloney	7 Aug 95 – 21 Feb 97
Col William H. Hodges	21 Feb 97 – 4 Feb 99
Col Mark J.D. Gehri	4 Feb 99 – 9 Jun 00
Col Bernie H. Fullenkamp	9 Jun 00 – 7 Jun 02
Col Joseph F. Mudd, Jr.	7 Jun 02 – 15 Jan 04
Col Paul K. White	15 Jan 04 – 30 Jun 05
Col Michael R. Boera	30 Jun 05 – 25 Oct 06
Brig Gen Douglas H. Owens	25 Oct 06 – 2 Sep 08
Brig Gen Philip M. Ruhlman	2 Sept 08 - 25 Jun 10
Brig Gen John W. Doucette	25 Jun 10 - Present

## 36<sup>th</sup> Wing Honors

**Campaign Streamers.** Southwest Asia: Defense of Saudi Arabia; Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

**Decorations.** AF Outstanding Unit Awards: [1] May 56-[1] May 58; 1 Jan- 31 Dec 68; 1 Dec 73 - 30 Apr 75; 1 Jul 75 - 30 Jun 77; 1 Jul 77 - 30 Jun 79; 1 Jul 86 - 30 Jun 88; 1 Jul 88 - 30 Jun 90; 1 Sep 90 - 31 Jul 91; 30 Jun 92 - 1 Jul 94; 1 Oct 94 - 30 Sep 96; 1 Oct 96 - 30 Sep 97; 1 Oct 97 - 30 Sep 99; 1 Sep 00 - 31 Aug 02; 1 Oct 02 - 30 Sep 04; 1 Oct 04 - 30 Sep 07.

**Bestowed Honors.** Authorized to display honors earned by the 36 OG prior to 2 Jul 48. **Campaign Streamers.** WWII: Antisubmarine, American Theater; Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe; Air Combat, EAME Theater. **Decorations. Distinguished Unit Citations:** France, 1 Sep 44; Germany, 12 Apr 45. Cited in the Order of the Day, Belgian Army: 1 Oct - 17 Dec 44; 18 Dec 44 - 15 Jan 45. Belgian Fourragere. Luxembourg Croix de Guerre: [44] - 45.

# ANDERSEN AFB HERITAGE PAMPHLET



## A look at more than six decades of history of Andersen Air Force Base and the 36<sup>th</sup> Wing



36<sup>th</sup> Wing History Office, 2010



**THE AIR FORCE ON GUAM: WWII** Guam was declared secure on 10 August 1944 after Marines and Army troops wrested the island from Japanese forces. Soon after the first-ever Air Force unit on Guam arrived in October 1944: The 7th Air Force's 11<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, which flew B-24 Liberators out of Naval Air Station Agana (today's Won Pat) on bombing missions against nearby Japanese-held islands. In January 1945 the 11<sup>th</sup> moved to Guam's first Air Force base called Depot Field, later renamed Harmon Field after Lt Gen Willard Harmon whose plane was lost at sea on 25 Feb 1945. Among the other passengers on Harmon's plane was Brig Gen James Andersen (picture) for whom AAFB is named. Meanwhile, northern Guam had been chosen as the site of two B-29 bases to accompany two more planned on Tinian, and another on Saipan that had been operational since Oct 1944. By Dec 1944 jungle was being cleared and runways constructed on a 24/7 basis, and the south runway was declared operational on 3 Feb 1945 when



the first B-29 landed. The earliest mission against Japan flew out of Andersen on 25 Feb 1945, headed by 314<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing Commander Brig Gen Thomas Power, a future Chief of Staff of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). That mission was not just a raid against Tokyo -- it symbolized the triumph of American engineering, military might, and advanced training and logistics. The 314<sup>th</sup>, with its trademark black square tail insignia (image left: **K = 330 BG**), continued to bomb Japanese targets through the end of the war, an effort greatly enhanced by the opening of the north runway in June 1945. Construction commenced on 8 Jan 1945 at Andersen's sister base Northwest Field where, unlike North Field, progress was slow. In fact the first mission under the 315<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing did not get off the ground until 26 June 1945, less than two months before the end of WWII. The 315<sup>th</sup> — flying B-29Bs utilizing a new radar system — specialized in night attacks on oil refineries. Flying a total 15 wartime missions, the 315<sup>th</sup> also flew the last bombing mission of WWII, returning to Guam on the morning of Aug 15 after Japan had already surrendered.

**COLD WAR BEGINS** In the four years following WWII Harmon Field continued its logistical and maintenance mission until closing in 1949. Northwest Field became a fighter base in 1946 and had the role of Marianas defense; first under the 23<sup>rd</sup> FW, and then the 46<sup>th</sup> FW. NWF was effectively abandoned and absorbed into a greater Andersen in 1949-50. In the postwar period North Field became a B-29 training base under the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and was renamed North Guam AFB in September 1947. After various name changes it finally became Andersen AFB on 7 Oct 1949. The following year the 19<sup>th</sup> BG sent its entire bomber fleet to Okinawa after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. During that war AAFB played a chiefly logistical role, although SAC bomb units began rotating through the base at this time. In June 1954 SAC established the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Division at AAFB as a tenant unit, and then took over the base completely on 1 Apr 1955, meaning that the Cold War had come to the Marianas. The first B-36 Wing, the 92<sup>nd</sup> out of Fairchild AFB, deployed to Guam in Oct 1954, while the first B-47 Wing to Guam was the 320<sup>th</sup> BW out of March AFB, arriving in Oct 1956. Fighter aircraft returned to Guam for defensive purposes in Aug 1956 when the 41<sup>st</sup> Fighter Interceptor Sq arrived from Korea. Flying F-86s, the 41<sup>st</sup> FIS was an integral part of Andersen's operations until that unit was inactivated in early 1960.

**A PERMANENT PRESENCE** Apart from the arrival of SAC and its rotational bomb wings, the most important event during this time was the transformation of Andersen's built environment into a base consisting largely of permanent, typhoon-proof concrete structures. AAFB was originally filled with rows of temporary wartime structures, but from the late 1940s through 1964 the base was under almost perpetual construction resulting in most of the structures found on base today. One especially important area was housing — until 1960 the majority of Andersen's Airmen and families lived in non-typhoon proof Quonset Huts and wooden prefabricated units located in detached AF housing areas at Northwest Field, Harmon, and elsewhere, or in private rentals. The completion of Capehart Housing's 1050 units in 1960 ended most of the Air Force's housing problems. Fortunately it was just in time for Nov 1962's Supertyphoon Karen which destroyed most non-concrete structures on Guam, including much of the base's remaining WWII-era infrastructure. The post-Karen rebuild project of 1963-64 resulted in the construction of fifteen major buildings including Chapel Two, Top of the Rock, and the Bowling Alley complex. Following the Karen Rebuild, apart from upgrades and beautification projects Andersen saw very little new construction until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



**VIETNAM WAR ERA** Base operations evolved significantly in the 1960s. In 1964 the first B-52s arrived to take over SAC's alert mission, and as American involvement in Southeast Asia escalated more B-52s arrived on Guam as part of an eight-year operation called Arc Light. The first Arc Light mission (18 June 1965) consisted of 30 B-52Fs and the effectiveness of the bombing was inconclusive. Tragically two of the planes collided in midair while waiting to be refueled; eight crewmen were lost. Yet the Air Force was undeterred, and it was during this time that Andersen became synonymous with B-52s. By the early 1970s Arc Light missions began tapering off, but for much of 1972 Andersen once again became the focal point of Air Force efforts in Southeast Asia. The first build-up at AAFB called Operation Bullet Shot occurred in April 1972 as a response to North Vietnam's massive invasion of South Vietnam. Large numbers of B-52s, crews, and maintainers stayed on Guam throughout the next months, and when North Vietnam showed its unwillingness to negotiate the Air Force unleashed Operation Linebacker II out of AAFB and U-Tapao, Thailand starting on 18 December 1972. During this "11-Day War" there were upwards of 155 B-52s on the ramp supported by an estimated 15,000 Airmen (1/3 of whom were maintainers). It was a defining moment for the base, and North Vietnam was effectively brought back to the negotiating table allowing for America's full withdrawal from Vietnam.

**A NEW ERA BEGINS** The repercussions of America's withdrawal came in less than three years when a re-strengthened North Vietnam invaded the south in April 1975. This event caused a major refugee crisis called Operation New Life during which Guam received more than 112,000 Vietnamese in the following months. More than 40,000 refugees flew directly to Andersen, and virtually all of them on Guam flew out of AAFB to bases in the US. Andersen quieted considerably after New Life ended, although the 60<sup>th</sup> BS continued flying B-52s out of Guam until 1990. Meanwhile, with the thawing of the Cold War AAFB became part of PACAF in 1989. In the wake of the June 1991 eruption of Mt Pinatubo in the Philippines more than 18,000 American refugees from Clark AB flooded into AAFB, and in 1996 a flow of more than 6,000 Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq passed through Andersen on their way to the US. Over the past three decades the base has also been struck severely by the forces of nature: Typhoon Omar in 1991, a major earthquake in 1993, and Supertyphoons Pamela (May 1976), Paka (Dec 1997), and Pongsona (Dec 2002). After each of these disasters the base was repaired and in turn the Air Force assisted the local community with its clean-up efforts. Mission-wise, the 1990s has been called a "sleepy hollow," but that period ended following the events of 9/11 when Andersen handled a tremendous surge of aircraft on their way in the fight against terror. From March to June 2003 the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing activated here, setting the stage for the 36<sup>th</sup> ABW's eventual transformation into the 36<sup>th</sup> AEW in February 2004 when rotational bomber and tanker units first began arriving. Along with the construction boom at Andersen over the last few years, the 36<sup>th</sup> ABW's 2006 redesignation as a Wing was firm evidence that the organization had entered a new stage in its history. Despite constant changes and challenges, the 36<sup>th</sup> and its tenant units at Andersen AFB are always "Prepared to Prevail."