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96th Air Refueling Squadron starts flying at Hickam

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Defense Media Activity



The 96th Air Refueling Squadron (ARS) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam recently performed its first operational mission by refueling B-52 bombers from the 5th Wing at Minot AFB, N.D.

The 96th ARS stood up at Hickam in September and has been conducting training sorties since then. The recent December refueling mission marked the squadron's first operational mission at Hickam.

The squadron won't be fully operational until August 2011, according to Lt. Col Brian Hill, 96th ARS commander.

"It's very satisfying and gratifying to me to conduct our first mission as a squadron," Hill said. "To be able show what we are capable of and what we're building here is very exciting.

There's a lot of hard work and sweat being put into by great people here."

The active-duty squadron worked with the 174th ARS, 185th Air Refueling Wing, Iowa Air National Guard (ANG) in refueling the bombers during consecutive night missions while in Hawaii.

Members of the Sioux City, Iowa ANG were happy to work with their active-duty partners.

“It’s always a good experience working with the active duty on missions like this,” said Capt. Duane Boyle, 174th ARS pilot. “We have the same background and have completed the same training, and we’re happy to be part of this start with them.”

During the two night missions, the 96th and 174th ARS off-loaded more than 400,000 pounds of fuel to the bombers.

During the last few months, the squadron has constantly been involved through training and with arrival of more and more personnel. Capt. Jasmine McCann, 96th ARS pilot, arrived in December and is already in the thick of the squadron’s important moments.

“I’m just getting here and to have a chance to stand up a squadron is really cool,” McCann said. “It’s really nice to have our first mission with our natural bombing partner. The B-52 and KC-135 are considered a mated pair, so this is great,” she added.

The 96th ARS is starting slow, but picking up speed as it looks toward this August and being a major factor in what occurs in the Pacific.
