

304th EXPEDITIONARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

The 304th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron is a provisional United States Air Force unit. It is assigned to the 13th Air Expeditionary Group, based at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

The 304th EAS operates the C-17 Globemaster III airlifter in support of Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica (JTF-SFA). The squadron provides the bulk of the aerial resupply between New Zealand and Antarctica. It also provides intercontinental transport of personnel and cargo to and from the United States.

The 304th EAS consists of aircraft and personnel deployed forward to New Zealand from the 62d and 446th Airlift Wings, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

LINEAGE

304th Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 25 May 1943

Activated, 1 Sep 1943

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1946

Redesignated 304th Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium), 10 May 1949

Activated in the reserve, 27 Jun 1949

Ordered to active service, 10 Mar 1951

Inactivated, 12 Mar 1951

Activated in the reserve, 15 Jun 1952

Redesignated 304th Troop Carrier Squadron (Heavy), 8 May 1961

Ordered to active service, 1 Oct 1961

Relieved from active duty, 27 Aug 1962

Redesignated 304th Air Transport Squadron, 1 Dec 1965

Redesignated 304th Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Inactivated, 30 Jun 1974

Redesignated 304th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron and converted to provisional status, 27

Mar 2003

STATIONS

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 1 Sep 1943
Alliance AAFld, NE, 16 Dec 1943
Pope Field, NC, 26 Jan 1944
Baer Field, IN, 2-9 Mar 1944
Fulbeck, England, 29 Mar 1944
Weston Zoyland, England, 12 Jun 1944 (operated from Follonica, Italy, 18 Jul-24 Aug 1944)
Peray, France, 5 Oct 1944
St Andre-de-L'Eure, France, 9 Nov 1944 (operated from Metz, France, May-Sep 1945)
Munich, Germany, Sep 1945-30 Sep 1946
Fairfax Field, KS, 27 Jun 1949
Olathe NAS, KS, 27 May 1950-12 Mar 1951
Olathe NAS, KS, 15 Jun 1952
Grandview AFB, MO, 3 Apr 1955
Hickam AFB, Hawaii, 1 Oct 2007

ASSIGNMENTS

442nd Troop Carrier Group, 1 Sep 1943-30 Sep 1946
442nd Troop Carrier Group, 27 Jun 1949-12 Mar 1951
442nd Troop Carrier Group, 15 Jun 1952
442nd Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Apr 1959
936th Troop Carrier (later, 936th Air Transport; 936th Military Airlift) Group, 17 Jan 1963-30 June 1974
Air Mobility Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 27 Mar 2003

ATTACHMENTS

13th Air Expeditionary Group, 1 October 2007

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1943-1946, 1949-1950
C-124, 1961-1962
C-46, 1949, 1950-1951, 1952-1955
C-119, 1957-1961
C-124, 1961-1971
C-130 1971-1974
C-17 2007

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
Rhineland
Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
France, [6-7] Jun 1944

EMBLEM

On an Air Force golden yellow disc bordered Air Force blue, a white cloud formation issuing from base; standing on the cloud a green dragon in upright, profile position, his wings and barbed tail upraised, his tongue and pupils of eyes red, his teeth and stomach white; on the creature's head an Air Force blue baseball cap and white earphones; clutched in his right forefoot, a white cargo bundle and in his left forefoot a paratrooper, Air Force blue, suspended from an open parachute, white; the ridge of the dragon's spine and the barb on his tail dark green; outlines and details Air Force blue throughout. (Approved, 6 Aug 1962)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Airborne assaults on Normandy, Southern France, Holland, and Germany, and transportation of cargo and passengers in ETO and MTO, during World War II.

The squadron was first activated as the 304th Troop Carrier Squadron in September 1943 under I Troop Carrier Command and equipped with Douglas C-47 Skytrains. It trained in various parts of the eastern United States until early 1944. The squadron deployed to England and became part of IX Troop Carrier Command.

The unit prepared for the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe. It began operations by dropping paratroops of the 101st Airborne Division in Normandy on D-Day on 6 June 1944 and releasing gliders with reinforcements on the following day. The unit received a Distinguished Unit Citation and a French citation for these missions. After the Normandy invasion the squadron ferried supplies in the United Kingdom.

After moving to France in September, the unit dropped paratroops of the 82nd Airborne Division near Nijmegen and towed gliders carrying reinforcements during Operation Market Garden, the airborne attack on the Netherlands. In December, it participated in the Battle of the Bulge by releasing gliders with supplies for the 101st Airborne Division near Bastogne.

When the Allies made the air assault across the Rhine River in March 1945, each aircraft of the squadron towed two gliders with troops of the 17th Airborne Division and released them near Wesel. The squadron also hauled food, clothing, medicine, gasoline, ordnance equipment, and other supplies to the front lines and evacuated patients to rear zone hospitals. It converted from C-47s to Curtiss C-46 Commandos and used the new aircraft to transport displaced persons from Germany to France and Belgium after V-E Day. It was inactivated in Germany in September 1946.

Postwar the squadron was activated in the air force reserve in 1940 at Fairfax Field, Kansas, operating C-46 Commandos. It was called to active duty and onactivated during the Korean War in 1951. Its aircraft and personnel were used as fillers for active duty units, and the squadron was inactivated. The unit reformed in the reserve in 1952, moving to Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base near Kansas City in 1955. Conducted routine reserve training operating Douglas C-124 Globemaster IIs flying worldwide transport missions beginning in 1961. The squadron was called to active duty in 1961 due to the Berlin Wall Crisis, but returned to reserve service in the late summer of 1962.

The squadron converted to Lockheed C-130A Hercules aircraft on 27 October 1971. It was inactivated on 30 June 1974 when personnel and equipment was merged into the 303d Tactical Airlift Squadron.

Combat Operations. The squadron participated in airborne assaults on Normandy during Operation Neptune in Jun 1944, in Southern France during Operation Dragoon, over the Netherlands during Operation Market in September 1944, and into Germany during Operation Varsity in March 1945. It was called to active service during the Berlin Crisis from October 1961 until August 1962. It routinely flew airlift support missions to the Pacific region and Southeast Asia from 1964 until 1972.

Airmen of the 304th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron flew a C-17 Globemaster III on a medical evacuation mission to bring a patient requiring immediate medical attention out of Antarctica on 28 August 2007. Twenty-four hours after completing their winter fly-in season for Operation Deep Freeze, 304th EAS Airmen from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., were asked to stay in place for an additional 24 hours for a possible medical evacuation mission. The next day the crews and a medical team assigned to the 446th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron from McChord AFB, on a routine training mission to Christchurch, were assembled and waited for word that the medical evacuation was approved and prepared to return to Pegasus White Ice Runway in Antarctica.

Like all missions, a medical evacuation requires some time to coordinate. Once the mission was given the go-ahead, there were still requirements that had to be met. Paperwork, phone calls, e-mails, mission planning and weather support all had to be in line before the mission could be launched. "It takes several hours to get in touch with everyone," said Maj. Bill Eberhardt, the

304th EAS director of operations. “We were at the end of (the winter fly-in season), so they already started to disassemble the runway at Pegasus. They had to stop and get everyone back in place. All the forecasters, air traffic controllers and everyone had to be back in place just for this flight.”

The medical team had to transform the McChord AFB C-17 from a cargo transport to a patient transport as the team set up, prepared and checked their equipment for the patient pick up in Antarctica. “We can do pretty much whatever is required of us,” said Maj. Judy Krill, a 446th AES critical care nurse. “We have two nurses and three medical technicians who are trained to provide basic care all the way up through advanced life support care.” The patient was not in a life-threatening situation, but still required surgery within 48 hours, said Maj. Barry Vansickle, a 466th AES critical care nurse. The Antarctic station members had done all they could for the patient, and as the ramp was lowered on the aircraft the ambulatory patient walked onto the C-17.

“He needed surgery and he couldn’t get it down there,” Major Vansickle said. “The sooner we could get him into surgery, the faster he could recover, so it’s better not to waste time.” As the patient laid on the litter in the C-17, the medical team kept busy ensuring the patient was comfortable and taken care of at all times. “We have to give the best care we can to the patient on the plane so when we get to New Zealand, he can get the more definitive medical treatment he needs,” said Master Sgt. Howard Halter, a 446th AES medical technician. Although medical evacuations from Antarctica are not uncommon, to have an entire Air Force crew is. During the season, the National Science Foundation hires a medical nurse to handle evacuations on the C-17.

Since the main season had yet begun there were few options and the Air Force took the lead. “I like medevac missions because that means we are helping people,” said Lt. Col. Jim McGann, the 304th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron commander. 2007

McChord Airmen Complete Operation Deep Freeze As a cold, dark winter approaches Antarctica, the 2012-2013 season of Operation Deep Freeze has come to an end. A team of Airmen from McChord Field, Wash. — from both the 446th and 62nd Airlift Wings —flew the last mission to the frozen white continent Feb. 26 before returning home to the Evergreen State March 1. For the entire operation, which began in August, McChord Airmen successfully moved nearly 1,700 passengers and more than 2.1 million pounds of cargo from Christchurch, New Zealand, to McMurdo Station, Antarctica. This took a total of 42 C-17 Globemaster III missions and almost 450 flying hours. While in New Zealand, the McChord Airmen joined the 304th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron for the operation. An average of 14 Reservists participated in each of the five rotations supporting Deep Freeze. On every rotation of the main season, a Reservist filled the positions of director of operations, chief loadmaster and ramp coordinator. Flying the C-17 missions was the 446th AW's role in the operation. The U.S. military started Deep Freeze to support the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Program with science and research activities in Antarctica. This season, the overall number of C-17 missions was reduced compared to recent years due to a seven-week operational pause in December and January. The pause was taken as a cost-saving initiative by the National Science Foundation, said Chief Master Sgt. Jim Masura, 446th Operations Group standardization evaluation loadmaster. 2013

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 3 June 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.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.