

## 309<sup>th</sup> AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

309<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 25 May 1943  
Activated, 1 Oct 1943  
Inactivated, 31 Jul 1945  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 10 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to active service, 1 May 1951  
Inactivated, 1 Feb 1953  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Assault, Rotary Wing, 12 Aug 1954  
Activated, 8 Oct 1954  
Inactivated, 9 Jul 1956  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Assault, and activated, 18 Mar 1963  
Organized, 1 Apr 1963  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron, Troop Carrier, 8 Mar 1965  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron, Tactical Airlift, 1 Aug 1967  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, 1 Aug 1968  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1970  
Inactivated, 31 Jul 1970  
Redesignated 309<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron on 10 Feb 2002  
Activated, 12 Mar 2002

#### STATIONS

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 1 Oct 1943

Alliance AAFld, NE, 19 Jan 1944  
Camp Mackall, NC, 8 Mar-21 Apr 1944  
Spanhoe, England, 21 Apr 1944  
Amiens, France, 6 Apr-May 1945  
Waller Field, Trinidad, May-31 Jul 1945  
Hensley Field, TX, 27 Jun 1949  
Donaldson AFB, SC, 9 Aug 1951-1 Feb 1953  
Donaldson AFB, SC, 8 Oct 1954-9 Jul 1956  
Pope AFB, NC, 1 Apr-1 Jul 1963  
Tan Son Nhut AB, South Vietnam, 1 Jul 1963  
Phan Rang AB, South Vietnam, 7 Jul 1967-31 Jul 1970  
Chievres, Belgium, 12 Mar 2002

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

443<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 1 Oct 1943  
I Troop Carrier Command, 15 Feb 1944  
Eighth Air Force, 21 Apr 1944  
315<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 26 Apr 1944-31 Jul 1945  
443<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 27 Jun 1949-1 Feb 1953  
Eighteenth Air Force (attached to 63<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing), 8 Oct 1954-9 Jul 1956  
Ninth Air Force (attached to 464<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing), 1 Apr 1963  
Pacific Air Forces, Jun 1963  
315<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 1 Jul 1963  
315<sup>th</sup> Air Commando (later, 315<sup>th</sup> Special Operations; 315<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift) Wing, 8 Mar  
1966-31 Jul 1970  
86<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 12 Mar 2002

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

L-3, 1943  
C-53, 1943-1944  
C-47, 1944, 1944-1945  
C-47A  
C-53D  
B-24, 1944-1945  
C-46, 1945  
C-46, 1951-1952  
C-119, 1952-1953  
H-19, 1954-1956  
H-21, 1956  
C-123, 1963-1970

### **COMMANDERS**

None (not manned), 1-11 Oct 1943  
Maj Arthur Kaufman, 11 Oct 1943

None (not manned), 21-30 Apr 1944  
LTC Smylie C. Stark, 1 May 1944  
Maj Edwin F. Titsworth (Acting), 16 Jan 1945  
LTC Smylie C. Stark, 23 Feb 1945  
Maj Edwin F. Titsworth, 28 Mar-Apr 1945  
Unkn, May-31 Jul 1945  
Unkn, 27 Jun 1949-Apr 1951  
LTC John A. Slaughter, 1 May 1951  
Maj Luther E. Davis Jr., by Oct 1951  
Maj Paul F. Ross, 17 Jan-31 Oct 1952  
Unkn, Nov 1952-1 Feb 1953  
Maj Ned W. Farr Jr., 8 Oct 1954  
Maj Frank L. Kebelman Jr., 15 Jul 1955-9 Jul 1956  
None (not manned), 1 Apr-30 Jun 1963  
Maj Gerald L. Woodruff, 1 Jul 1963  
LTC Orville D. Beardsley, Oct 1963  
LTC Richard M. Kenny, Nov 1964  
Unkn, Jan-Dec 1965  
LTC Calvin G. Bass, by Jan 1966  
LTC Robert I. Ferguson, 1 Jul 1966  
LTC Herbert M. Hazzard, 7 Feb 1967  
LTC Conrad Kreps, 30 May 1967  
LTC Wayne S. Crawford Jr., 30 Apr 1968  
LTC Lloyd G. Russell, 14 Sep 1968  
LTC Paul E. Rova, Mar 1969  
LTC Col Harvey H. Hogue, c. Aug 1969  
LTC Ben V. Walker, Feb 1970  
LTC William J. Gibson, by 1 Apr 1970  
Maj Earl J. Dunn Jr., Jun 1970  
None (not manned), 1-31 Jul 1970

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Central Europe

Vietnam

Vietnam Advisory  
Vietnam Defensive  
Vietnam Air  
Vietnam Air Offensive  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III  
Vietnam Air/Ground  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV  
TET 69/Counteroffensive  
Vietnam Summer-Fall  
Vietnam Winter-Spring  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

**Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
France [6] Jun 1944

Presidential Unit Citations  
Southeast Asia, 21 Jan-12 May 1968  
Southeast Asia, 1 Apr-30 Jun 1970

Navy Presidential Unit Citation  
Vietnam, 20 Jan-31 Mar 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device  
1 May 1963-30 Apr 1965  
30 Jun-9 Jul 1965  
15 Oct 1966-30 Apr 1967  
10 Jun-31 Dec 1967  
15 Jul 1968-30 Jun 1969

Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
29 Jun 1966-31 Jul 1970

**EMBLEM**



309<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron

309<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron emblem: On a disc as a terrestrial globe Azure, land masses Sable, a scimitar bendwise Argent, gripped Or, winged of the third (Silver Gray), in chief, five mullets arched White, in middle chief point the mullet larger charged with a torteau, all within a narrow border White. Attached above the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow White border and inscribed "MODUS PERFECTUS" in White letters. Attached below the disc, a Blue scroll edged with a narrow White border and inscribed "309TH AIRLIFT SQ" in White letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** 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 four stars represent the unit's Campaign Participation Credits. The scimitar, an assault weapon, refers to the unit's rotary wing mission and also its present two-fold mission of military combat and civic support, with the stylized wings representing the aerospace vehicle used to accomplish that mission. The globe represents the unit's worldwide reach. (Approved, 14 Mar 1966)

#### **MOTTO**

MODUS PERFECTUS--Perfection in All We Do

#### **NICKNAME**

#### **OPERATIONS**

Aerial transportation in ETO of materiel, equipment, and troops, including airborne assaults on Normandy, Holland, and Germany, 6 Jun 1944-May 1945. Flew intratheater combat cargo and troop carrier missions in Southeast Asia, 1 Jul 1963-26 Jun 1970.

The VC may have hated the defoliant flights, but not as much as US and ARVN commanders loved them. The result was the continual expansion of the program, with the Special Aerial Spray Flight (as Ranch Hand had subsequently been designated) attached to the 309th Air Commando Squadron (also flying C-123s) in March 1965. This move brought for the first time the formal inclusion of defoliant operations to the Air Commandos' already unusual repertoire of weapons. Included in this repertoire was a new herbicide Ranch Hand tested that same month, for the first time in the war. Like Purple, this herbicide got its nickname from the

painted band around the 55-gallon drums it arrived in. It was known as “Orange.”

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Air Force Order of Battle

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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.