

314 OPERATIONS GROUP

MISSION

The 314 Operations Group operates and maintains the personnel and training fleet of 14 C-130J aircraft.

LINEAGE

314 Transport Group established, 28 Jan 1942

Activated, 2 Mar 1942

Redesignated 314 Troop Carrier Group, 4 Jul 1942

Redesignated 314 Troop Carrier Group, Heavy, 26 Jul 1948

Redesignated 314 Troop Carrier Group, Medium, 19 Nov 1948

Inactivated, 8 Oct 1957

Redesignated 314 Tactical Airlift Group, 24 Aug 1978

Activated, 15 Sep 1978

Inactivated, 15 Jun 1980

Redesignated 314 Operations Group and activated, 1 Dec 1991

STATIONS

Drew Field, FL, 1 Mar 1942

Bowman Field, KY, 24 Jun 1942

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 4 Nov 1942

Lawson Field, GA, 19 Feb-4 May 1943

Berguent, French Morocco, 20 May 1943

Kairouan, Tunisia, 26 Jun 1943

Castelvetrano, Sicily, 1 Sep 1943-13 Feb 1944

Saltby, England, 20 Feb 1944-28 Feb 1945

Poix, France, 4 Mar 1945

Villacoublay, France, 15 Oct 1945-15 Feb 1946

Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb-9 Sep 1946

Albrook Field, Canal Zone, 9 Sep 1946

Curundu Heights, Canal Zone, 10 Mar-Oct 1948
Smyrna (later, Sewart) AFB, TN, 21 Oct 1948
Laurensburg-Maxton Air Field, NC, 19 Apr 1950
Sewart AFB, TN, 5 May-1 Sep 1950
Ashiya AB, Japan, 7 Sep 1950-15 Nov 1954
Sewart AFB, TN, 15 Nov 1954-8 Oct 1957
Little Rock AFB, AR, 15 Sep 1978-15 Jun 1980
Little Rock AFB, AR, 1 Dec 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

50 Transport Wing, 2 Mar 1942
52 Transport Wing, 15 Jun 1942
53 Troop Carrier Wing, 30 Aug 1942
50 Troop Carrier Wing, 3 Nov 1942
52 Troop Carrier Wing, 20 Feb 1943
IX Air Force Service Command, 20 May 1945
302 Transport Wing, 11 Aug 1945
European Air Transport Service (Provisional), 3 Sep 1945
United States Air Forces European Theater, 31 Dec 1945
Eighteenth Air Force, 15 Feb 1946
Strategic Air Command, 21 Mar 1946
Third Air Force, 25 Jul 1946
Caribbean Air Command, 9 Sep 1946
Panama Air Depot, 10 Mar 1948
5700th Wing, Caribbean Air Command, 26 Jul 1948
Ninth Air Force, 21 Oct 1948
314 Troop Carrier Wing, 1 Nov 1948-8 Oct 1957
314 Tactical Airlift Wing, 15 Sep 1978-15 Jun 1980
314 Airlift Wing, 1 Dec 1991

ATTACHMENTS

Far East Air Forces [FEAF], 7-9 Sep 1950
FEAF Combat Cargo Command, 10 Sep-30 Nov 1950
314 Air Division, 1 Dec 1950-25 Jan 1951
315 Air Division [Combat Cargo], 25 Jan 1951-1 Nov 1952
483 Troop Carrier Wing, 1 Jan 1953-15 Nov 1954

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1942-1946
C-53, 1942-1943
C-54, 1947-1948
C-82, 1949-1950
C-119, 1950-1957
C-130, 1978-1980

C-130, 1991

C-21, 1999

COMMANDERS

2nd Lt L. C. Lillie, 2 Mar 1942

2nd Lt J. W. Blakeslee, 14 May 1942

Maj Leonard M. Rohrbough, 26 Jun 1942

Col Clayton Stiles, 9 Apr 1943

Lt Col Halac G. Wilson, 22 Aug 1945

Col Charles W. Steinmetz, 29 Nov 1945-15 Feb 1946

Unkn, 15 Feb 1946-7 Oct 1948

Col Richard W. Henderson, 8 Oct 1948

Col William H. Delacey, 27 Aug 1951

Col David E. Daniel, 28 Sep 1951

Lt Col Harold L. Sommers, 1 May 1952

Col William H. Delacey, Nov 1954-unkn

Col Charles W. Howe, 1 Jan-8 Oct 1957

Col Robert N. Clarke, 1 Nov 1978

Col Frank E. Willis, 7 May 1979-15 Jun 1980

Col David J. Mason, 1 Dec 1991

Col Robert H. Meyers, 5 Aug 1992

Col Melvin M. Reeves Jr., 30 Jul 1993

Col Paul J. Fletcher, 30 Jun 1995

Col Joseph H. Fitzpatrick, 24 Jan 1997

Col Norman A. Weinberg, 23 Sep 1998

Col Dale I. Pangman, 19 May 2000

Col Douglas E. Kruelen, 17 May 2002

Col Rudolph T. Byrne, #2008

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Central Europe

Korea

UN Defensive
UN Offensive
CCF Intervention
First UN Counteroffensive
CCF Spring Offensive
UN Summer-Fall Offensive
Second Korean Winter
Korea, Summer-Fall 1952
Third Korean Winter
Korea, Summer-Fall 1953

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Sicily, 11 Jul 1943
France, [6-7] Jun 1944
Korea, 28 Nov-10 Dec 1950

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

6 May 1953-10 Sep 1954
11 Jan-14 Feb 1955
[1 Dec] 1991-30 Jun 1993
1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995
1 Jul 1995-31 Mar 1997
1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1999
1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2003
1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

1 Jul 1951-27 Jul 1953

EMBLEM



Or, on clouds in fess. Azure, two boots passant of the field, ornamented. Gules. (Approved, 17 Aug 1942)

Group will use the wing emblem with group designation in the scroll.

MOTTO

VIRI VENIENTE--Men Will Come

OPERATIONS

The 314 Airlift Wing traces its lineage back to the early days of World War II with the activation of the 314 Transport Group on 2 March 1942. First formed at Drew Field, Florida, the group moved to numerous stateside locations learning to operate C-47 transport aircraft. The group was redesignated the 314 Troop Carrier Group in July 1942, and its chain of command changed frequently during this hectic time. After stops at Bowman Field, Kentucky and Sedalia Army Air Field, Missouri, the group moved to Lawson Field, Georgia, in February 1943 to complete its training. In the spring of 1943, the training began to focus on the dropping of paratroopers and included a trip to Pope Field, North Carolina, for training in glider operations. As the stateside training drew to a close, the 314 TCG solidified its structure with the 32d, 50th, 61st, and 62d Troop Carrier Squadrons assigned, each consisting of roughly 13 to 16 C-47 aircraft. This number fluctuated greatly throughout WW II, but a little more than a dozen aircraft was the norm. The group was assigned to the 52d Troop Carrier Wing. (The 53 TCS, a part of the 314 today, was assigned to the 61 TCG during WW II. It was also a part of the 52 TCW, and its operations were nearly identical.)

The C-47 was a workhorse in WW II. Its aircrews transported troops and supplies into battle during combat missions and ferried fuel and supplies whenever and wherever they were needed. Glider pilots were also a part of the 314, but there was so much shuffling done with gliders that they only rarely operated together with their parent unit. When a combat mission was scheduled, troop carrier wings either towed gliders or transported paratroopers, never both. Since the 52 TCW did not happen to be assigned glider tows until later in the war, 314 TCG gliders were usually towed into battle by other wings. When gliders were not used, many of the glider pilots worked

with what they called “power pilots,” serving as copilots aboard C-47 aircraft. Members of the glider community were part aviator and part infantryman.

Glider crews assigned to the 314 TCG flew CG-4 gliders into combat. Loaded with troops and supplies, the glider aircrews would become infantrymen on the ground until the area was secure and they could return home to prepare for another mission. When the gliders remained intact after a mission, which was by no means assured, some C-47s were equipped with hooks to snatch them from the ground.

In May 1943, the group transferred overseas and was assigned to 12th Air Force in the Mediterranean theater of operations. After spending about a month based at Berguent Field in French Morocco, the group moved to Kairouan, Tunisia, and prepared for its first combat mission.

Allied forces invaded Sicily on 10 July 1943, and the 314 was at the forefront. Colonel Clayton Stiles, 314 TCG commander, led the group’s formation of 50 aircraft as they dropped airborne forces over the island in Operation HUSKY #1. Four ships failed to return that night, including Colonel Stiles’ plane, shot down over the Mediterranean on the way out. Fortunately, after spending some time in a rubber raft, his crew was picked up and returned. Overall, the mission consisted of 226 C-47 aircraft dropping about 3,400 paratroopers. It was viewed as a great success, setting the table for the beach landings, and serving to validate airborne operations.

The following day, Allied forces were in a precarious situation, and HUSKY #2 was hastily organized and ordered. The 314 TCG was part of a force of 144 aircraft that were to drop about 2,000 more paratroopers into the battle area. This required the formation to fly over 35 miles of battle front in bad weather, but those were just the known hazards. What was unknown was how friendly naval forces in the area were going to react. Partly due to a lack of communication and partly due to an enemy air attack on naval vessels immediately before the C-47s flew by, many Allied ships opened fire on the formation. The group pressed on and completed the mission, taking anti-aircraft fire from both friend and foe. Dropping more forces into the fight certainly had its positive effects, but the price was steep. In all, 23 aircraft were shot down (including four from the 314), many more were heavily damaged, and there were 229 casualties. For actions on the night of 11-12 July 1943, the group received its first Distinguished Unit Citation.

As Allied forces worked their way across Sicily, the 314 moved personnel and equipment in support. In early September, the group was able to move to the island, setting up operations near the town of Castlevetrano. From here, the group participated in the invasion of Italy.

Despite the fact that the Italians surrendered on the same day, the invasion of Italy on 8 September 1943 was met by stiff German resistance. Five days later, three successive airborne operations were ordered to provide reinforcements. Code named GIANT #1, #2, and #3, the 314 flew seven aircraft in the first operation on the 13 September and 35 aircraft during the second and third missions the next night. Making troop and supply drops near Salerno, Italy, these operations greatly contributed to the overall success of the invasion, and all 314 aircraft returned safely.

In February 1944, the group packed up yet again and moved to Saltby Air Field in England. All eyes began to focus on France, and training intensified as D-Day approached.

After literally years of preparation, the invasion of France finally occurred on 6 June 1944. The 314 TCG participated in Operation NEPTUNE, the airborne/amphibious phase of Operation OVERLORD, taking off at 2321 hours the night before. Colonel Stiles once again led a formation of 60 aircraft of the 314, all part of the much larger airborne delivery force. Despite difficult weather conditions and intense enemy anti-aircraft fire, all but one of the group's planes made it home. The airborne forces were successfully inserted and contributed immeasurably to the overall success of the invasion. By the end of the day, a beach head had been well established, but reinforcements were needed.

The second NEPTUNE mission (code named FREEPORT) was flown in the early morning hours of 7 June for the purpose of resupplying previously dropped airborne forces. The 314 contributed 52 aircraft. The drop zones were said to be in Allied hands, and it was expected to be a much easier mission. It was anything but. Flying at tree top level, the 314 aircraft received intense and accurate small arms fire that did significant damage to the unarmed and unarmored C-47s and C-53s. The mission was completed, but once again at a steep cost. Three aircraft were shot down, and 11 more were rendered unflyable due to heavy damage. There were numerous instances of individual heroism during FREEPORT, and the collective efforts of the group earned a second Distinguished Unit Citation. The Allies had seized a piece of French property, and they would never let go.

In what eventually turned out to be an unsuccessful effort to end the war before Christmas, Operation MARKET GARDEN, the airborne invasion of Holland, commenced on 17 September 1944. 314 crews conducted initial airborne operations, glider tows, and resupply drops. The airborne phase went extremely well, but the overall plan proved too ambitious. In three missions between 17 and 21 September, the 314 flew 204 sorties with all but four aircraft returning.

The 314 TCG continued to move personnel and supplies to the continent until they were ready to move over themselves. On 28 February 1945, the group began to relocate to Airfield B-44 in France. On 24 March, the group dropped paratroopers and conducted glider tows during Operation VARSITY, the airborne assault across the Rhine River and into the heart of Germany. All 80 aircraft of the 314 returned safely. The route was on. After V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, the 314 TCG evacuated Allied prisoners from Germany before being transferred back to the United States in February 1946.

Between WW II and the Korean War, the 314 TCG served in the Canal Zone in Panama, operating air terminals in the Panama and Antilles areas from October 1946 through October 1948. The group then moved to Smyrna AFB, Tennessee, and joined the 314 Troop Carrier Wing, which had been activated there on 1 November 1948. It is important to note that the 314 TCW was created for the group, essentially getting its numerical designation from the group. This was quite common at the time, because the wartime practice of assigning numerous operational flying

groups to a single wing was not practical when those groups returned home. Generally speaking, each base needed its own support structure, under the same wing as the flying unit. Some groups went away, some wings were created, and they met in the middle. Because of this, the lineage and honors of a group was bestowed to its like-numbered wing, and the 314 TCW essentially inherited the accomplishments of its group.

The two organizations were not initially together long. From August 1950 to November 1954, the 314 TCG was detached from the wing and stationed at Ashiya, Japan, for service in the Korean War. While there, the 314 TCG was attached to the Far East Air Forces and primarily operated C-119 aircraft, transporting troops and supplies from Japan to Korea and evacuating wounded personnel. During the Korean War, the group participated in numerous major combat operations.

After the initial successes for the North Koreans following their surprise invasion on 25 June 1950, the tide was quickly turned when UN forces successfully executed amphibious landings at Inchon in September. Shortly afterward, the 314 TCG was on the scene delivering fresh troops and supplies to the newly recaptured Kimpo Airport in Seoul. In October, the group dropped paratroopers over Suncheon in support of the United Nations' assault on Pyongyang. The tables had turned, but China's entry into the conflict in November reversed them yet again. After being poised to completely overrun North Korea, UN forces were once again on the run.

In late November 1950, Chinese forces estimated at about 70,000 had completely surrounded UN forces in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. For about two weeks, the 314 TCG participated in aerial resupply efforts, delivering ammunition, gasoline, food, and other equipment. The nature of the situation required the group to fly its C-119s very low and very slow to insure the supplies fell into the right hands. These heroic efforts allowed the better portion of UN forces to escape to safety as the harsh Korean winter settled in.

The retreat of UN forces continued, as the numerically superior Communist forces regained control of the situation and once again drove well south of the 38th parallel. These were very dark times for American soldiers on the battlefields.

By February 1951, the situation was extremely precarious for the UN forces, and they seemed on the brink of collapse. Communist forces had driven a wedge down Korea's central corridor and threatened to cut off and surround the UN forces on the eastern and western coasts. The frigid winter, lack of supplies, constant retreat, and endless battle-fatigue had Allied morale dangerously low. A victory was desperately needed. That victory would come at Chipyeong-Ni, an area vital both in terms of its key terrain and the tactical situation at the time. In near full retreat, the Allied line was drawn there.

Chipyeong-Ni was occupied by a group of about 5,000 Allied soldiers originally organized for a counterattack in January 1951. On 11 February, the Communists began an assault that pushed right through the region and around the forces at Chipyeong-Ni, and once again UN forces were surrounded. Against all odds, they were ordered to stand and fight. When the Communists turned their full attention to capturing Chipyeong-Ni, these 5,000 men faced 30,000 to 40,000 attackers.

The battle raged for three days, and supplies were dangerously low. At times, the order was given to cease fire simply because ammunition was nearly exhausted.

314 TCG aircrews dropped 87 loads of ammunition, gasoline, and rations to help sustain the forces at Chipyeong-Ni. The airdrops were just enough for them to hang on, keep fighting, and ultimately win. UN forces were finally able to break through and link up with Chipyeong-Ni from the south, and the battle lines were eventually restored near the 38th parallel, the original starting point.

Remarkably, in the defense of Chipyeong-Ni, UN forces suffered only 52 killed, 259 wounded, and 42 missing in action. Communist casualties numbered between 5,000 and 8,000, clear evidence of the value of the terrain being defended. The Communist push was thwarted, and they were eventually forced to the negotiating table.

The 314 TCG remained in Japan after the armistice in July 1953 to transport supplies to Korea and evacuate prisoners of war. The group rejoined the 314 Troop Carrier Wing in November of 1954, returning to Smyrna AFB, which had been renamed Sewart AFB.

In 1954, it again transferred, without personnel or equipment to the US where it participated in a continuous stream of tactical exercises and inspections until Oct 1957.

The group flew worldwide airlift and provided all C-130 aircrew training to U.S. and allied aircrews, Sep 1978-Jun 1980 and from Dec 1991 to present.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency, U.S. Air Force, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.