

## 342 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, HEAVY



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

342 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942  
Activated, 3 Feb 1942  
Inactivated, 29 Oct 1945  
Redesignated 342 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 15 Jul 1946  
Activated, 4 Aug 1946  
Redesignated 342 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 28 May 1948  
Redesignated 342 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 1 Oct 1959  
Discontinued and inactivated, 1 Feb 1963

#### STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 3 Feb 1942  
Sarasota, FL, 29 Mar-16 May 1942  
Grafton Underwood, England, 9 Jun 1942  
Polebrook, England, 8 Sep 1942  
Algeria, 19 Nov 1942  
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 22 Nov 1942  
Biskra, Algeria, 27 Dec 1942  
Chateaudun-du Rhumel, 18 Feb 1943  
Pont-du-Fahs, Tunisia, 10 Aug 1943  
Depienne, Tunisia, 14 Aug 1943  
Cerignola, Italy, 9 Dec 1943  
Amendola, Italy, 16 Jan 1944  
Marcianise, Italy, Oct-29 Oct 1945  
Smoky Hill AAFld, KS, 4 Aug 1946  
Biggs AFB, TX, 18 May 1948

Blytheville AFB, AR, 1 Jul 1959  
Robins AFB, GA, 1 May 1960-1 Feb 1963

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Eielson AFB, AK, 4 Nov 1947-12 Mar 1948  
Mildenhall England, 3 Apr 1952-3 Jun 1952  
Lakenheath, England, 2 Mar 1952-3 Apr 1952  
Upper Heyford, England, 5 May 1956-4 Jul 1956

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

97 Bombardment Group, 3 Feb 1942-29 Oct 1945  
97 Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946  
97 Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952  
4137 Strategic Wing, 1 May 1960-1 Feb 1963

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1942-1945  
B-29, 1946-1950  
B-50, 1950-1955  
B-47, 1955-1959  
B-52, 1960-1963

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Paul Beard, 1949  
Maj George K. Smith, #1954

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

Antisubmarine, American Theater  
Egypt-Libya  
Air Offensive, Europe  
Tunisia  
Sicily  
Naples-Foggia  
Anzio  
Rome-Arno  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Southern France  
North Apennines  
Rhineland

Central Europe  
Po Valley  
Air Combat, EAME Theater

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
Steyr, Austria, 24 Feb 1944  
Ploesti, Rumania, 18 Aug 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
2 Jul-3 Nov 1957  
2 Feb 1961-31 Mar 1962

#### **EMBLEM**



342 Bombardment Squadron emblem: America and the United Nations are engaged in a long range war. The ability to prosecute such a war, therefore, to a successful conclusion, will depend more and more upon the possibility of carrying the attack over long distances to the enemies' doorstep. This means mobile craft capable of safely and rapidly transporting troops, food and equipment to points within striking range. Since our softening attacks must be made from the air, and carriers can not accommodate the beam of our flying fortresses which have been causing so much destruction and consternation among our enemies, it must follow that more Flying Fortresses will be needed. Personnel of the 342nd Bombardment Squadron when based at Sarasota-Bradenton Air Field, Sarasota, Florida, solemnly promised the artists at Walt Disney Studios that upon receipt of their insignia, they would repay the favor By completing any "rough and tough" assignment that came their way. The insignia shows a unicorn creature from "Fantasia," standing on a cloud, and kicking bombs into mid-air and onto the enemy below. From all reports, the promise is being fulfilled.

On a disc white, edged light blue, over two lightning flashes crossed, yellow, extending over the edge of the border, a stylized sunburst yellow, orange, and red, over all and in base a sphere proper, entwined with a serpent black and white, head upward to right. (Approved, 9 Nov 1951)

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

Antisubmarine, Mar-Apr 1942; combat in ETO and MTO, 17 Aug 1942-26 Apr 1945.

On 21 July 1947, the 342 Bomb Squadron received a message by phone from Headquarters 15th Air Force telling them that they would depart with eight B-29s and four C-54s for Tokyo on a self-supporting flight. Taking the conventional route from Fairfield-Suisan, California, via Hawaii, Kwajalein, and Guam to Yokota Air Base, Tokyo, Japan, the planes left for their 30-mission on the 25th of July under the command of Major Floyd E. Wikstrom. Once at Guam the big Superforts were given their orders for the Air-Force Day review over Tokyo. By that time the recently overhauled engines had 36 hours flying time on them so the aerial giants received 50-hour inspections in order to be ready for any mission upon arrival at Yokota. Departing from Guam early morning of Air Force Day the planes rendezvoused over the island of Miyake Jima in trail of the 19th Bomb Group and the First Air Division from Okinawa. After the display of American air power in the Far East the 97th's eight B-29s flew a familiarization mission around the Tokyo area while the P-80s and A-26s from the review were landing. After the landing all of the men were greeted by personnel stationed at Yokota and later were given an orientation on what they were expected to do on their mission at Yokota, Tokyo's largest air base. While at Yokota the men were under the operational control of the 314th Composite Wing at Johnson Field. This control was exercised by Training Field orders which were delivered to the 97th detachment each day for the following day's missions. In addition the organization was attached to the 9th Photo Squadron for logistical support, which assisted the 97th immensely in securing necessary equipment on their stay there. Nearby Tokyo, with its picturesque shops and stands afforded entertainment for the personnel on their stay there. Besides the large theaters and hotels there the men were also interested in the many scenic wonders of Tokyo area, such as the waterways and parks. The incessant jabbering of the Japanese people added to the confusion of the 97th soldier as he made his way up the narrow Japanese streets, however, the 97th soldier was once more seeing a new and strange place with the "Globe-Trotting" 97th. On the base itself there were ample facilities, living quarters, mess hall and orderly room were located in one area. A squadron operations office had been provided and engineering problems were taken care of in the hangar provided on the flight line. A squadron dispensary was set up in a room of the barracks area. On the 28th of August the planes and personnel cleared Yokota as planned and headed for the Northland's southernmost air base, Elmendorf, near Anchorage, Alaska. Staying overnight, the men prepared to leave the following day on the last haul to Smoky Hill, the last leg of the journey. After their arrival back at Smoky Hill the men looked back on another Strategic Air Command mission well performed. On their mission to the Far East the 97th had participated in six major missions and performed a large number of sorties. Another point on the globe had been conquered by the 97th Bombardment Group.

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Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *Biggs AFB, TX*, El Paso, TX. 1949.

Unit yearbook. *810<sup>th</sup> Air Division, Biggs AFB, TX*. 1954.

*War Insignia Stamp Album, Vol. 3*, Hearst Publications, Inc., 1942.