

343 BOMB SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

343 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942
Activated, 3 Feb 1942
Redesignated 343 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 23 May 1945
Inactivated, 27 Mar 1946
Activated, 1 Jul 1947
Redesignated 343 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 28 May 1948
Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Jun 1966
Redesignated 343 Bomb Squadron, 9 Mar 2010
Activated, 1 Apr 2010

STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 3 Feb 1942
Barksdale Field, LA, 16 Feb 1942
Ft Myers, FL, 30 Mar 1942
Drane Field, FL, 15 May-3 Jul 1942
Ramat David, Palestine, 7 Aug 1942
St Jean, Palestine, 21 Aug 1942
Kabrit, Egypt, 10 Nov 1942
Gambut, Libya, 31 Jan 1943
Lete, Libya, 3 Mar 1943
Hergla, Tunisia, 25 Sep 1943
Brindisi, Italy, 18 Nov 1943
Manduria, Italy, 19 Dec 1943

Lecce, Italy, 17 Jan 1944-19 Apr 1945
Fairmont AAFld, NE, 8 May 1945
McCook AAFld, NE, 25 Jun 1945
March Field, CA, 10 Nov 1945-27 Mar 1946
Andrews Field, MD, 1 Jul 1947
Spokane AAFld (later, Spokane AFB; Fairchild AFB), WA, 24 Sep 1947
Yokota AB, Japan, 5 Aug 1950-22 Jul 1954
Lincoln AFB, NE, 25 Jul 1954-11 Nov 1955
Lakenheath RAF Station, England, 12 Nov 1955-28 Jan 1956
Lincoln AFB, NE, 29 Jan 1956-25 Jun 1966
Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Apr 2010

ASSIGNMENTS

98 Bombardment Group, 3 Feb 1942
40 Bombardment Group, 10 Nov 1945-27 Mar 1946
98 Bombardment Group, 1 Jul 1947
98 Bombardment (later, 98 Strategic Aerospace) Wing, 16 Jun 1952-25 Jun 1966
917 Operations Group, 1 Apr 2010

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-24, 1942-1945
B-29, 1945; 1947-1954
B-47, 1954-1966
B-52, 2010

COMMANDERS

Unkn, 3 Feb 1942
Capt Wilfred E. Brown, 18 Feb 1942
Maj Julian M. Bleyer, 2 Sep 1942
Capt F. W. DeLong, Mar 1943
Capt Thomas W. Bennett Jr., by Jan 1944
Maj Willis B. Sawyer, 10 Feb 1944
Unkn, 1945-27 Mar 1946
Unkn, 1 Jul 1947
Maj Robert H. Benesh, by Nov 1947
Lt Col William L Gray, by Apr 1949
Capt Dale F. Stewart, c. 1950
Capt Dewey L. Chapman, 12 Aug 1950
Capt Joseph V. Padula, 13 Sep 1950
Capt Charles J. Burns, 1 Nov 1950
Lt Col Joe Maddalena Jr., 1 Mar 1952
Maj Robert C. Brown, by May 1952
Lt Col B. B. White, by Oct 1952
Maj Fountain L. Brown, by Dec 1952

Lt Col Max W. Rogers, by Aug 1953
Lt Col Robert K. Simeral, by Feb 1954
Lt Col Lowell B. Fisher, by Jan 1955
Maj Arthur K. Alexander, by Aug 1956
Lt Col Joe V. Disana, by Nov 1956
Maj James D. Jelly, 22 Sep 1959
Lt Col Robert U. Gaines, by Jul 1961
Lt Col Lester E. Holmes, by Oct 1964
Lt Col John S. Allison, by Jul 1965
Lt Col J. W. Wilkin, by Jan-25 Jun 1966
Lt Col Jeff A. Stogsdill, 1 Apr 2010
Lt Col Denis Heinz, 4 Jun 2011

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

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

Korea

UN Defensive

UN Offensive

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

UN Summer-Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korea Summer-Fall, 1953

Third Korean Winter

Korea Summer-Fall, 1953

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

North Africa and Sicily, Aug 1942-17 Aug 1943

Ploesti, Rumania, 1 Aug 1943

Korea, 1 Dec 1952-30 Apr 1953

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jul 1964-1 Jun 1965

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

[7 Aug 1950]-27 Jul 1953

EMBLEM



A black disc, over the left [sinister] area of the disc three curved golden orange bands, highlighted white; in the upper right [dexter] area of the disc an atomic symbol of the second, and two silhouetted branches of olive, white. SIGNIFICANCE: Black and orange are the squadron

colors. The black disc representing the earth and three curved orange bands of aircraft vapor trails together portray the squadron's capabilities; the olive branch signifies the squadron's peaceful intentions while the atomic symbol indicate our electronic and nuclear capabilities. Taken as a whole the emblem represents worldwide capability and the squadron's past and present tremendous striking power in acting to insure and preserve peace for all. (Approved, 15 Apr 1957)



On a disc Sable, in dexter chief an olive wreath arched bendwise sinister Argent and an atomic symbol Tenné, nucleus of the second; issuant from sinister three enarched piles in point to dexter base per arch Azure and the first garnished Or fimbriated Tenné; all within a narrow Orange border. Attached below the disc, a Black scroll edged with a narrow Orange border and inscribed "343D BOMB SQUADRON" in Orange 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 curved orange, blue and yellow lines represent aircraft vapor trails and portray the Squadron's global circling capabilities and U.S. airpower. The olive branch signifies peaceful intentions, and the atomic symbol indicates nuclear capabilities. (Approved, 6 Dec 2021)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

World War II saw B-24s from the 343 BS assigned to numerous stations around the world, including Barksdale Field, La. The 343 bombers arrived at Barksdale on Feb. 16, 1942. Ft. Myers and Drane Field, both located in Florida were also home to bombers of the 343 BS in 1942.

There is no doubt that the 343 BS landed its punches against the enemy during World War II. From August 1942, through April 15, 1945, the 343 BS launched hundreds of combat missions against enemy forces in the European and Mediterranean Theatre of Operations from a number of locations in Europe and the Middle East. Jump off locations in the Middle East included Kabrit, Egypt, Gambut, Libya, Hergla, Tunisia, Lete, Libya, as well as Ramat David and

St Jean, Palestine. The 343 BS also based bombers at three locations in Italy during the war. Brindisi, Manduria and Lecce, Italy played home base to bombers and crews of the 343.

The 343 BS saw combat action in campaigns all across the ETO and MTO in World War II: Egypt-Libya; Air Offensive, Europe; Tunisia; Sicily; Naples-Foggia; Anzio; Rome-Arno; Normandy; Northern France; North Apennines; Rhineland; Central Europe; Pro Valley and Air Combat, European-African-Middle-East (EAME) Theater.

For combat operations against the enemy, the 343 BS earned the Distinguished Unit Citation for actions in North Africa and Sicily, August 1942 - August 1943, and was awarded another DUC for participation in the low-level assault on oil refineries at Ploesti, Rumania, Aug. 1, 1943.

Redesignated as the 343 Bombardment Squadron (Very Heavy) on May 23, 1945.

The 343 BS was attached to the 40th Bombardment Group from Nov. 10, 1945 until it was inactivated on March 27, 1946.

Reactivated again on July 1, 1947, with the 98th Bombardment Group as part of the Strategic Air Command, 343 BS crews started training on the B-29. The squadron was redesignated 343 BS (Medium) on May 28, 1948.

During the Korean War, the 343 Bomb Squadron took up the challenge and saw combat operations from Aug. 7, 1950 to July 25, 1953. The squadron participated in Korea campaigns including the UN Defensive; UN Offensive; CCF Intervention; First UN Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Summer-Fall Offensive; Second Korean Winter; Korea Summer-Fall, 1953; Third Korean Winter and Korea Summer-Fall, 1953.

The 343 BS earned the Distinguished Unit Citation for actions in Korea, Dec. 1, 1952 – April 30, 1953, and the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation: Aug. 7, 1950–July 27, 1953.

Part of the 98th Bombardment (later, 98 Strategic Aerospace) Wing, as of Jun 16, 1952, the 343 BS returned to the U.S. in July of 1954, where it transitioned to the B-47 and trained for long-range bombardment missions. The squadron was stationed at Lincoln AFB, NE., from Jan. 29, 1956, until being discontinued and inactivated again on June 25 1966.

The 343th Bomb Squadron was reactivated on April 1, 2010 under the 917th Wing, at Barksdale Air Force Base, La. The squadron's role is a classic associate unit with the 2nd Bomb Wing, at Barksdale. They provide a venue for Reserve aircrew to season, upgrade and fill B-52 FTU flight instructor positions. Their association is to maintain and/or increase CAF support for Air Expeditionary Force and Global Deterrence Force rotations through Nuclear and Conventional Methods.

Barksdale Reservists Reorganizing Air Force Reserve Command officials are making organizational changes at Barksdale AFB, La., to improve Reservists' support of B-52 bomber

operations there. On Jan. 1, AFRC will inactivate Barksdale's 917th Wing, which consists today of B-52 squadrons and an A-10 ground-attack unit, wing spokeswoman Jessica d'Aurizio, told the Daily Report Monday. At the same time, the command will reactivate the 307th Bomb Wing, a unit with a Cold War heritage, to subsume those B-52 units: the 93rd Bomb Squadron, 343 BS, plus maintenance and support elements. The 93rd BS is the Air Force's sole B-52 schoolhouse, while 343 BS airmen support the operations of Barksdale's active duty 2nd BW. Meanwhile, the inactivating 917th Wing's A-10s of the 47th Fighter Squadron will remain at Barksdale, but transfer to the organizational control of AFRC's 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., said d'Aurizio. These moves will "make us more efficient and allow us to concentrate on the B-52 mission," she said. The 47th FS is transitioning from a training unit to combat-coded status, she noted. Barksdale will host a ceremony on Jan. 8, with Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner, Air Force Reserve chief, presiding, to mark these changes, she said. 2010

USAF Unit Histories

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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.