

403 WING



MISSION

The 403 Wing provides command and staff supervision to assigned squadrons and flights that support tactical airlift missions, including airlift of personnel, equipment and supplies, Aircraft: C-130J Hercules, WC-130H Hercules and the only employed long-range weather reconnaissance unit in the Department of Defense, known as the “Hurricane Hunters.”

LINEAGE

403 Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, established, 10 May 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active duty, 1 Apr 1951
Inactivated, 1 Jan 1953
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Jan 1953
Ordered to active duty, 28 Oct 1962
Relieved from active duty, 28 Nov 1962
Redesignated 403 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Jul 1967
Redesignated 403 Composite Wing, 31 Dec 1969
Redesignated 403 Tactical Airlift Wing, 29 Jul 1971
Redesignated 403 Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Wing, 15 Mar 1976
Redesignated 403 Rescue and Weather Reconnaissance Wing, 1 Jan 1977
Redesignated 403 Tactical Airlift Wing, 31 Dec 1987
Redesignated 403 Airlift Wing, 1 Feb 1992
Redesignated 403 Wing, 1 Jul 1994

STATIONS

Portland Arpt (later, IAP), OR, 27 Jun 1949-25 Mar 1952
Ashiya AB, Japan, 14 Apr 1952-1 Jan 1953
Portland IAP, WA, 1 Jan 1953
Selfridge AFB (later, AGB), MI, 16 Nov 1957

Keesler AFB, MS, 1 Nov 1983

ASSIGNMENTS

Fourth Air Force, 27 Jun 1949
Tactical Air Command, 2 Apr 1951
Eighteenth Air Force, 1 Jun 1951-1 Jan 1953
Fourth Air Force, 1 Jan 1953
Tenth Air Force, 16 Nov 1957
Fifth Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Sep 1960
Twelfth Air Force, 28 Oct 1962
Fifth Air Force Reserve Region, 28 Nov 1962
Central Air Force Reserve Region, 31 Dec 1969
Eastern Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Apr 1971
Western Air Force Reserve Region, 15 Mar 1976
Fourth Air Force, 8 Oct 1976
Fourteenth Air Force, 1 Aug 1992
Twenty-Second Air Force, 1 Jul 1993
Tenth Air Force, 1 Oct 1994
Twenty-Second Air Force, 1 Apr 1997

ATTACHMENTS

315 Air Division, 14 Apr 1952-1 Jan 1953

WEAPON SYSTEMS

T-7, 1949-1951
T-11, 1949-1951
C/TC-46, 1949-1952
C-46, 1952
C/VC-47, 1952
C-54, 1952
C-119, 1952
C-46, 1953-1957
TC-47, 1957-unkn
C-119, 1957-1969, 1970
U-3, 1969, 1970-1971
O-2, 1970-1971
A-37, 1970-1971
C-130, 1971-1976, 1977, 1987
HH-1, 1976-1987
HH-3, 1976-1987
CH-3, 1976-1977
HC-130, 1976-1987
WC-130, 1977-1981, 1983
UH-1, 1979-1987

COMMANDERS

Brig Gen Chester E. McCarty, 27 Jun 1949
Col Sidney S. Murphy, Jul 1951
Brig Gen Chester E. McCarty, Aug 1951
Lt Col Robert E. Harrington, 6 Dec 1951
Brig Gen Chester E. McCarty, 8 Feb 1952
Col Philip H. Best, 14 Apr 1952
Col Maurice F. Casey Jr., 15 May 1952-1 Jan 1953
Unkn, 1 Jan 1953-unkn
Col Robert W. Sheets, by Jan 1954
Col James H. McPartlin, 15 Nov 1957
Col Gari F. King, 1 Aug 1961
Col George L. Kittle, 1 Dec 1970
Brig Gen George H. Wilson, 22 Mar 1971
Brig Gen Roy M. Marshall, 25 Jun 1973
Col James S. Brown, 22 Jul 1976
Lt Col Elmer C. Apel, 17 Aug 1976
Col James C. Wahleithner, 18 Jan 1977
Brig Gen Richard L. Hall, 9 Apr 1979
Brig Gen Joe L. Campbell, 24 May 1989
Brig Gen Ernest R. Webster, 2 Mar 1994
Brig Gen Charles D. Ethredge, 2 Apr 2000
Brig Gen Richard R. Moss, Jul 2004
Col Jay Jensen
Col Jeffrey A. Van Dootingh, 9 Jan 2019
Col Stuart M. Rubio, 5 Jun 2021

HONORS

Service Streamers

Korean Theater

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Panama, 1989-1990

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1977-31 Dec 1978

1 Jul 1984-30 Jun 1986

1 May 1992-30 Apr 1994

1 May 1994-30 Apr 1996

1 May 1996-31 Aug 1997

1 Jan 2004-31 Dec 2005

1 Oct 2008-30 Sep 2010

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
[1952]

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm
14 Feb-11 Mar 1968

Bestowed Honors

Authorized to display honors earned by the 403 Troop Carrier Group prior to 15 Aug 1947.

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

New Guinea

Northern Solomons

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte; Luzon

Southern Philippines

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Philippine Islands, 17 Apr-30 Jun 1945

Navy Unit Commendation

[Sep 1943]-15 Jul 1944

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

EMBLEM



403RD TROOP CARRIER WING





403 Tactical Airlift Wing emblem: Azure, two hands in bend sinister proper (natural color), the upper a dexter hand issuing from a cloud argent and holding an olive branch of the second, a lightning flash or and a sword sable, the lower sinister hand in profile issuing from a fan indented of seven sections (blue, white, orange, black, white, yellow and red) which in turn issue from base, above the cloud four mullets of four points of the third; all within a diminished bordure of the last. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The hand issuing out of the cloud represents the primary mission, dropping weapons of war (sword) and peace (olive branch) to the ground forces, symbolized by the hand reaching up to take the supplies. From this comes the Latin phrase Spectate Ad Caelum. The wind's four supporting groups are represented by a star above the cloud. The fan in the lower part of the emblem indicates the foreign countries in which the primary mission group has served; the colors of the fan correspond to the flag colors of the countries. Jan 1953

403 Wing emblem: Celeste, a cloud Argent issuing two lightning flashes chevron wise to base Or enfiled by a sword palewise point to base Sable, in chief four mullets of four of the second; all within a diminished bordure Yellow. Attached below the shield a White scroll edged with a

narrow Yellow border and inscribed 403 WING in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE** Blue and 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. (Approved, 19 Dec 1995)

MOTTO

SPECTATE AD CAELUM—Look to the Skies

OPERATIONS

Trained in the US for airlift operations, 1949-1952. During 1952, from a base in Japan, managed troop carrier resources in support of the Far East Command and the United Nations in the Korean War. Performed airborne assault, airdrop, air-landed resupply, medical air evacuation, and other transport missions. Routine airlift training in the Reserve, 1953-1962.

Also supported Army airdrop training, ferried aircraft to various parts of the country and the world, took part in training exercises, and performed humanitarian missions. Served on active duty during Cuban Missile Crisis, Oct-Nov 1962. In 1963, it moved US troops to the Dominican Republic and airlifted Christmas gifts destined for US servicemen in Vietnam.

From 1969 to 1971, the 403 served as a composite wing with a variety of missions and aircraft before returning to tactical airlift missions. It took part in several tactical exercises and humanitarian airlift operations, 1971-1976 and ferried aircraft, supplies, and equipment to US forces in Vietnam and other points in the Far East.

In 1976-1977, the wing performed search and rescue, aeromedical evacuation, and weather reconnaissance missions. Its crews and aircraft flew into hurricanes to determine their intensities and movements.

In 1978, after a mass suicide at Jonestown in Guyana, the wing helped recover the bodies of US citizens. After the eruption of Mount St. Helens (Washington) in 1980, the wing participated in search and rescue efforts. In the 1980s it supported deployments and the first shuttle launches, flying precautionary search and rescue missions.

Occasionally provided weather reconnaissance data to supplement that provided by satellites. In 1987, the wing gave up its search and rescue functions and returned to tactical airlift missions, but retained its weather reconnaissance capability.

Supported rotations to Panama during the 1990s. The wing continued to fly tactical airlift missions worldwide, including contingency and humanitarian airlift operations.

Air Force Reserve Command delayed the transfer of 10 C-130J transports from Keesler AFB, Miss., to Pope Field, N.C., that is scheduled as part of the Air Force's force structure adjustments next fiscal year. The C-130Js are assigned to AFRC's 815th Airlift Squadron, which operates and maintains them together with its active associate unit, the 345th AS. Originally

scheduled to leave Keesler for Pope starting on Oct. 1, the C-130Js now will not depart until April 2014, with a possible further delay until October 2014, announced Keesler officials on Aug. 13. "The Air Force's decision to postpone 10 aircraft leaving Keesler is welcomed news for our employees and their families affected by the restructuring," said Col. Craig LaFave, commander of AFRC's 403 Wing at Keesler. "All future proposals to our C-130 fleet [are] speculative now but [are] tied to planned Army and Marine Corps [end] strength reductions, which ultimately drive the need for tactical airlift. We should have more clarity over the next few months," he said. 2013

The 345th Airlift Squadron was symbolically inactivated Friday at Keesler AFB, Miss. The unit and its associate, the Air Force Reserve's 815th Airlift Squadron, are being inactivated "as a result of broader force structure initiatives announced in 2013," according to an April 23 AFRC release. "Throughout history, our squadron has provided a lot of combat support for our nation, doing exactly what our country needed for its national defense," said Lt. Col. Michael J. Ramirez, 345th AS commander. "Whenever our nation needed that excess capability, the 345th was there and stood up to fulfill that need, and we've written another chapter in the unit's history in the past three-and-a-half years that everyone in this room has contributed to." Col. Frank L. Amodeo, commander of the 403 Wing, said, "The 345th and 815th are an impressive team. In January 2011, the two squadrons deployed to Afghanistan and smashed the world record for airdrop missions in a month-81 missions moving 5.6 million pounds of cargo." An inactivation ceremony for the 815th AS will be held in June, but many of the Active Duty members will no longer be present, so the unit held its "symbolic ceremony early." 2014

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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