

437th OPERATIONS GROUP

MISSION

LINEAGE

437th Troop Carrier Group established, 15 Apr 1943
Activated, 1 May 1943
Inactivated, 15 Nov 1945
Redesignated 437th Troop Carrier Group, Medium, 10 May 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active duty, 10 Aug 1950
Inactivated, 10 Jun 1952
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957
Redesignated 437th Military Airlift Group, 31 Jul 1985
Redesignated 437th Operations Group, 24 Sep 1991
Activated, 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Baer Field, IN, 1 May 1943
Sedalia AAFld, MO, 8 Jun 1943
Pope Field, NC, 10 Oct 1943
Baer Field, IN, 29 Dec 1943-c. 12 Jan 1944
Balderton, England, Jan 1944
Ramsbury, England, 5 Feb 1944 (Air echelon deployed to Montalto di Castro AB, Italy, Jul-Aug 1944, and to Chilbolton, England, 1-6 Sep 1944)
Coulommiers-Voisins, France, 24 Feb-28 Jul 1945
Baer Field, IN, 15 Aug 1945
Marfa AAFld, TX, 14 Sep-15 Nov 1945
Chicago-Orchard Aprt (later, O'Hare Field-Chicago Intl Aprt), IL, 27 Jun 1949
Shaw AFB, SC, 14 Aug-16 Oct 1950
Brady AB, Japan, 8 Nov 1950-10 Jun 1952
O'Hare Intl Aprt, IL, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957
Charleston AFB, SC, 1 Oct 1991

ASSIGNMENTS

I Troop Carrier Command, 1 May 1943
50th Troop Carrier Wing, Feb 1944
53rd Troop Carrier Wing, 17 Feb 1944
50th Troop Carrier Wing, 10 Jul 1945
U.S. Forces European Theater, 18 Jul 1945
I Troop Carrier Command, 6 Aug 1945-15 Nov 1945
437th Troop Carrier Wing, 27 Jun 1949-10 Jun 1952
437th Troop Carrier Wing, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957
437th Airlift Wing, 1 Oct 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1943-1945
C-53, 1943-1945
C-109, 1945
CG-4A, 1943-1945
Horsa glider, 1944
C-46, 1949-1952
C-119, 1951
C-46, 1952-1957
C-141, 1991-2000
C-17, 1993

COMMANDERS

Col Cedric E. Hudgens, 1 May 1943
Col Donald J. French, 12 Jun 1944-15 Nov 1945
Col John R. Roche, by Jul 1949
LTC Edward H. Nigro, 26 Jan 1951
LTC George W. Sutcliffe, 5 Mar 1951
LTC Jack L. Crawford Jr., 5 Sep 1951-10 Jun 1952
Col William B. Whitacre, 15 Jun 1952
LTC William H. Swanson, by Dec 1952
LTC Harry J. Nehf, by Jun 1954
LTC Walter T. Fletcher, by 26 Oct 1954
Unkn, Jan 1955-Nov 1957
Col David K. Mulkey, 1 Oct 1991
Col Thomas J. Stephenson, 17 Jan 1992
Col Roy H. Bass Jr., 14 Aug 1992
Col Richard J. Casey, 19 Apr 1994
Col Robert D. Bishop Jr., 31 Jul 1995
Col Mark R. Zamzow, 1 Jul 1996
Col Ronald P. Richardson, 28 Oct 1998
Col Robert R. Allardice, 26 May 2000

Col Russell J. Deluca, 23 May 2002
Col William J. Bender, 19 Sep 2002
Col Paul A. Curlett, 7 May 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Korea

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

UN Summer-Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korea Summer-Fall, 1952

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

France, [6-7] Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat "V" Device

11 Sep 2001-30 Jun 2003

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995

1 Jul 1995-30 Jun 1997

1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1998

1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 2000

1 Jul 2011-30 Jun 2012

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

1 Jul 1951-[10 Jun 1952]

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 437th Troop Carrier Group (TCG) originally activated on 1 May 1943 under the command of Lt Col Cedric E. Hudgens at Baer Field, Indiana, where it began training with C-47 Skytrain aircraft in preparation for combat duty overseas. After initial training at Baer Field, the group moved to Sedalia Army Airfield, Missouri, for glider towing training. Next, the group went to Pope Field, North Carolina, for paratrooper airdrop and airborne training with the U.S. Army. Then it was back to Baer Field for two weeks until shipping out to Ramsbury, England, in January 1944.

While at Ramsbury, despite the constant threat of German air raids, poor weather, and even poorer living conditions, the group continued to hone their operational skills. The 437 TCG's four squadrons—the 83d, 84th, 85th, and 86th Troop Carrier Squadrons (TCS)—and their 52 C-47 Skytrains and 125 CG-4A Hadrian gliders continually practiced paradrop and glider towing operations, all in anticipation of the inevitable Allied invasion of mainland Europe. On 29 May 1944, 18 C-47s and crews from the 85 TCS joined the 436 TCG at Membury, England. Simultaneously, 82d Airborne Division paratroopers arrived at Ramsbury.

On 1 June, personnel were restricted to base and combat crewmembers segregated from the general populace because of their forehand knowledge of Operation OVERLORD—the imminent Allied invasion of Normandy, France. At 2300 local time on 5 June 1944, the invasion began. The first to launch, the 85 TCS's C-47s left Membury towing the 101st Airborne Division to an area near Cherbourg, from where the 101st would help secure the route from the Utah beachhead. An hour later, the 83d, 84th, and 86th squadrons launched from Ramsbury, towing the 82d paratroopers into the fight. All four squadrons braved heavy flak and ground fire on 6 to 7 June, both during the initial attack and during follow on missions to deliver reinforcements, ammunition, and rations. In the end, the 437 TCG's four squadrons set a perfect record by delivering all their gliders and thousands of paratroopers into the battle. The 437 TCG's participation in World War II had only begun with D-Day.

The next month, in July 1944, the group contributed aircraft and crews to Operation DRAGOON—the invasion of Southern France. The operation utilized 413 C-47s and 407 gliders in its effort to engage the German army in the south and allow Allied troops to advance northward to Normandy. The 437th once again excelled, and the operation was a success. Also in July 1944, the group began ferrying supplies to the front lines in France, but that mission was short-lived. The group was called to participate in Operation MARKET GARDEN—the Allied attempt to breach the Siegfried Line and cross the Rhine River into Germany. On 17 September 1944, the 437th launched 70 C-47s, each towing a glider loaded with the 101st Airborne Division bound for Holland. It was to be a bleak day.

The heavy flak and small arms fire encountered during the daylight invasion took its toll on the 437th, and it lost more men that day than in all its previous missions combined. However, the 437th's strength and courage endured, and despite its losses the group successfully carried out its mission. As the winter of 1944 approached, the 437th ferried supplies into France and Belgium and evacuated wounded back to England.

In December, a freezing fog settled over England and northern Europe, allowing the Germans to advance and surround the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne, Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge. With severe weather grounding all flights from England, it was not until 22 December that supplies could be airdropped into the area. At the front of this operation was the 437 TCG, whose ammunition and ration resupply missions on 22 through 26 December 1944 saved thousands of lives and helped stem the German advance. On 24 February 1945, the group moved east of Paris to Coulommiers-Voisins where it conducted its last combat missions of World War II as part of Operation VARSITY—the airborne assault over the Rhine River.

On 24 March 1945, the group helped airdrop and airland two British airborne divisions near Wesel, Germany, who then combined with other Allied forces to deliver a fatal thrust into the heart of Germany. The group's C-47s did double duty this time, towing two gliders each, and the operation was yet another success for the group, despite some narrow escapes after crash landings behind enemy lines.

Throughout March and April 1945, the group flew numerous missions to carry gasoline, food, medicine, and other supplies to ground forces pushing across Germany and to ferry wounded troops and released prisoners of war out of Germany to rear-zone hospitals. After Victory in Europe (V-E) Day on 8 May 1945, the group evacuated prisoners of war and displaced personnel to relocation centers. By the middle of August 1945, the group was back at Baer Field, Indiana, then on to Marfa Army Airfield, Texas, where the 437th Troop Carrier Group inactivated on 15 November 1945 as part of the post-war draw down.

Trained as a reserve unit until Aug 1950, when it was ordered to active duty because of the outbreak of war in Korea and later moved to Japan in Nov 1950. Between Dec 1950 and Jun 1952, the group airlifted ammunition, rations, aircraft parts, gasoline, and other war supplies from Japan to United Nations bases in Korea, while evacuating wounded troops from Korea to hospitals in Japan. During 1951, the 437th also dropped paratroops and flew re-supply and reinforcement missions in support of the Eighth Army in Korea. Between Jan-Jun 1952, the group transported battlefield replacements and evacuated troops on leave.

From Jun 1952-Nov 1957, the group again served as Reserve training organization flying C-46s.

Resumed control of operational squadrons in Oct 1991. Routinely deployed aircraft and aircrews in support of humanitarian and contingency operations in the Balkans, Southwest Asia, Africa, Russia, and provided disaster relief support, 1992-2001. Supported Global War on Terrorism contingencies from Oct 2001-.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 16 Nov 2010

Updated:

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.