

439 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

439 Troop Carrier Group established, 14 May 1943
Activated, 1 Jun 1943
Inactivated, 10 Jun 1946
Redesignated 439 Troop Carrier Group, Medium, 19 May 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active service, 1 Apr 1951
Inactivated, 3 Apr 1951
Redesignated 439 Fighter-Bomber Group, 26 May 1952
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957
Redesignated 439 Military Airlift Group and activated, 27 Dec 1965
Organized, 8 Jan 1966
Inactivated, 24 Dec 1968
Redesignated 439 Operations Group and activated in the Reserve, 1 Aug 1992

STATIONS

Alliance AAFld, NE, 1 Jun 1943
Sedalia AAFld, MO, 15 Jun 1943
Alliance AAFld, NE, 2 Aug 1943
Pope Field, NC, 18 Nov 1943-16 Dec 1943
Laurinburg-Maxton AAB, NC, 16 Dec 1943
Baer Field, IN, 2-14 Feb 1944
Balderton, England, 10 Mar 1944
Upottery, England, 26 Apr 1944

Juvincourt, France, 8 Sep 1944
Lonray, France, 28 Sep 1944
Chateaudun, France, 4 Nov 1944-7 Sep 1945
Baer Field, IN, 22 Sep 1945
Sedalia AAFld, MO, 7 Oct 1945-10 Jun 1946
Selfridge AFB, MI, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951
Selfridge AFB, MI, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 8 Jan 1966-24 Dec 1968
Westover ARB, MA, 1 Aug 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

I Troop Carrier Command, 1 Jun 1943
Ninth Air Force, c. 10 Mar 1944
IX Troop Carrier Command, 26 Aug 1944
I Troop Carrier Command, Sep 1945
IX Troop Carrier Command, c. Dec 1945
Tactical Air Command, 21 Mar 1946
Third Air Force, 1946-10 Jun 1946
439 Troop Carrier Wing, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951
439 Fighter Bomber Wing, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957
Military Air Transport Service, 27 Dec 1965
322 Air Division, 8 Jan 1966-24 Dec 1968
439 Airlift Wing, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1943-1945
C-46, 1945-1946
T-6, 1949-1950
T-7, 1949-1951
T-11, 1949-1951
TC-46, 1949-1951
T-6, 1952-1954
C-46, 1952-1955
T-28, 1953-1955
F-51, 1953-1954
T-33, 1953-1954
F-80, 1953-1956
F-84, 1956-1957
F-86, 1957
TC-47, 1957
C-119, 1957
C-118, 1966-1968
C-124, 1966-1968
C-131, 1966-1968

C-5, 1992

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Ralph L. Zimmerman, 1 Jun 1943
Col Charles H. Young, 21 Jan 1944
Col Gordon L. Edris, 6 Oct 1945
Lt Col Lester C. Messenger, 16 Apr 1946
Lt Col William M. Massengale Jr., 28 May-10 Jun 1946
Lt Col Leslie W. Seppala, 27 Jun 1949
Lt Col Donald G. LePard, 16 Nov 1949
Maj John H. Mohn, 24 Feb 1950
Col Kenneth R. Strauss, 17 May 1950
Unkn, 20 Jan-3 Apr 1951
Maj O. G. Shuh, 15 Jun 1952-unkn
Lt Col Richard M. Thornburn, 1953-1 Mar 1955
Unkn, 1 Mar 1955-1956
Lt Col Gari King, 1956-1957
Col Everett W. Langworthy, 8 Jan 1966
Col Roger J. Sterr, 28 Jul 1967-24 Dec 1968
Col Robert K. Peacock, 1 Aug 1992
Col James K. Moran, 20 Apr 1994
Col David J. McCarthy, 1 Oct 1996
Col Samuel C. Mahaney
Col Udo K. McGregor
Col James M. Linder
Lt Col Michael Kohut, 15 Oct 2001
Lt Col Udo K. McGregor, 4 Oct 2003-Jul 2007
Unkn, Jul 2007-Oct 2011
Col Michael G. Miller , Nov 2011
Col Neil Hede

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Rome-Arno
Southern France
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
France, [6-7] Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 May-13 Jun 1967

1 Oct 1999-30 Sep 2001

1 Oct 2001-30 Sep 2003

1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2007

1 Jul 2007-30 Jun 2009

French Croix de Guerre with Palm

[6-7] Jun 1944

15 Aug 1944

French Fourragere

EMBLEM

Azure, a beaver volant proper, holding a missile in his right paw, argent, markings gules and sable and supported in the air with aircraft wings of the third, tanks of the fourth, on the right wing the national aircraft marking in its proper colors. (Approved, 20 Apr 1956)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Trained in the U.S. with C-47s, 1943- Jan1944. Moved to England, Feb-Mar 1944, for duty with Ninth Air Force. Began operations by dropping paratroops of the 101st Airborne Division in Normandy on 6 Jun 1944 and releasing gliders with reinforcements on the following day. The group received a DUC and a French citation for these missions. After the Normandy invasion the group ferried supplies in the United Kingdom until the air echelon was sent to Italy in Jul to transport cargo to Rome and evacuate wounded personnel. The detachment dropped paratroops of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment along the Riviera in support of the invasion of Southern France on 15 Aug, and later towed gliders to provide reinforcements; for these missions the group earned another citation from the French government.

After the air echelon returned to England on 25 Aug the group resumed its cargo missions. After moving to France in Sep, the group dropped paratroops of the 82d Airborne Division near Nijmegen and towed gliders carrying reinforcements during the airborne attack on Holland. In Dec, it participated in the Battle of the Bulge (Ardennes-Alsace) by releasing gliders with supplies for the 101st Airborne Division near Bastogne. When the Allies made the air assault across the Rhine River

in Mar 1945, each aircraft of the 439 towed two gliders with troops of the 17th Airborne Division and released them near Wesel. The group also hauled food, clothing, medicine, gasoline, ordnance equipment, and other supplies to the front lines and evacuated patients to rear zone hospitals.

Converting from C-47s to C-46s, the 439 used the new aircraft to transport displaced persons from Germany to France and Belgium after V-E Day. The group returned to the U.S., Jul-Sep 1945, and trained with C-46 aircraft until inactivated. From Jun 1949, the group trained in troop carrier operations until mobilized in Apr 1951, its personnel being used as fillers for USAF organizations worldwide. Activated in the Reserve on 15 Jun 1952, the group trained in fighter-bomber operations until phased out in Sep 1957, and the group flew TC-47 and C-119 aircraft until Nov.

On 8 Jan 1966 the 439 replaced the 1602d Air Transport Group at Rhein-Main AB, Germany. The group controlled assigned and attached Military Airlift Command airlift units at Rhein-Main, provided air transport and air evacuation services within and occasionally outside Europe.

Earned an Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for May-Jun 1967 support during the Middle East crisis. Since 1 Aug 1992 the group has trained for and flown global airlift operations, transporting personnel, equipment, and supplies and participating in numerous exercises.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 1 Dec 2010
Updated: 14 Jan 2023

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.