

# 444<sup>th</sup> AIR EXPEDITIONARY WING

## MISSION

### LINEAGE

444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (Heavy) established, 15 Feb 1943

Activated, 1 Mar 1943

Redesignated 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Heavy, 26 Apr 1943

Redesignated 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, 19 Nov 1943

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1946

Redesignated 444<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Group and converted to provisional status, 15 Jan 2003

Redesignated 444<sup>th</sup> Air Expeditionary Wing, 24 Feb 2010, and remained on provisional status

### STATIONS

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Mar 1943

Great Bend Army AFld, KS, 29 Jul 1943-12 Mar 1944

Charra, India, 11 Apr 1944

Dudhkundi, India, 1 Jul 1944-1 Mar 1945

West Field, Tinian, 7 Apr-28 Sep 1945

Merced AAFld, CA, 15 Nov 1945

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 6 May-1 Oct 1946

### ASSIGNMENTS

Second Air Force, 1 Mar 1943

58<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 23 Jul 1943

Second Air Force, 5 Nov 1943

58<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 20 Nov 1943

XX Bomber Command, 12 Oct 1944

58<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 3 Apr 1945

I Staging Command, 10 Nov 1945

Fourth Air Force, 15 Nov 1945

58<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing, 14 Jan-1 Oct 1946

Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 15 Jan 2003

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24, 1943

B-26, 1943

B-17, 1943-1944

YB-29, 1943-1944

B-29, 1943-1946

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Arthur T. Snell, 28 Mar 1943

Maj Robert J. Hughey, 14 Apr 1943

Maj Walter W. Cross, 17 Apr 1943

Col Alva L. Harvey, 5 Aug 1943

Col Henry R. Sullivan, 22 Apr 1945

Col James C. Selser Jr., 3 Jun 1945-1 Oct 1946

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II: India-Burma

Air Offensive, Japan

China Defensive

Western Pacific

Central Burma

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Yawata, Japan, 20 Aug 1944

Japan, 10-14 May 1945

Japan, 24 Jul 1945

### **EMBLEM**

None

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Combat training in the US, Mar 1943-Mar 1944. Moved to India in Mar-Apr 1944 and assigned to

Twentieth Air Force. Flew supplies over the Hump to Chinese bases that its B-29s would later use for staging attacks against Japan. On 15 Jun 1944, participated in the first Army Air Force strike on the Japanese home islands since the Doolittle raid in 1942. Bombed transportation centers, naval installations, aircraft plants, and other targets in Burma, China, Thailand, Japan, and Formosa. Flew supplies over the Hump to Chinese bases that its B-29's were to use for staging attacks on Japan. On 15 Jun 1944 participated in the first AAF strike on the Japanese home islands since the Doolittle raid in 1942.

Bombed transportation centers, naval installations, aircraft plants, and other targets in Burma, China, Thailand, Japan, and Formosa. Conducted a daylight raid against iron and steel works at Yawata, Japan, in Aug 1944, being awarded a DUC for the mission. Evacuated staging fields in China in Jan 1945 but continued operations from India, bombing targets in Thailand and mining waters around Singapore. Moved to Tinian in the spring of 1945 for further operations against targets in Japan. Participated in bombardment of strategic objectives and in incendiary raids on urban areas for the duration of the war. Received a DUG for attacking oil storage facilities at Oshima, bombing an aircraft plant near Kobe, and dropping incendiaries on Nagoya, in May 1945. Struck light metal industries at Osaka in Jul 1945, receiving another DUC for this action. Returned to US in late 1945 and was assigned to Strategic Air Command until inactivation on 1 Oct 1946.

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 31 Aug 2011

Updated: 10 Jan 2013

#### 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.

Unit History. *The Pictorial History of the 444<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, Special*. Nd.