

512 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

1 Combat Cargo Group established, 11 Apr 1944
Activated, 15 Apr 1944
Redesignated 512 Troop Carrier Group, 19 Sep 1945
Inactivated, 24 Dec 1945
Redesignated 512 Troop Carrier Group, Medium, 4 Aug 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 2 Sep 1949
Ordered to Active Service, 15 Mar 1951
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1951
Activated in the Reserve, 14 Jun 1952
Inactivated, 14 Apr 1959
Redesignated 512 Military Airlift Group on 31 Jul 1985
Redesignated 512 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Aug 1992

STATIONS

Bowman Fld, KY, 15 Apr 1944
Baer Fld, IN, 5-13 Aug 1944
Sylhet, India, 29 Aug 1944
Tulihal, India, 30 Nov 1944
Tsuyung, China, 20 Dec 1944
Dohazari, India, 30 Jan 1945

Hathazari, India, 15 May 1945
Myitkyina, Burma, Jun 1945
Liuchow, China, 30 Aug 1945
Kiangwan, China, 9 Oct-3 Dec 1945
Camp Anza, CA, 23-24 Dec 1945
Reading Muni Aprt, PA, 2 Sep 1949
New Castle County Aprt, DE, 1 May 1950-1 Apr 1951
New Castle County Aprt, DE, 14 Jun 1952
Willow Grove NAS, PA, 20 Jul 1958-14 Apr 1959
Dover AFB, DE, 1 Aug 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

I Troop Carrier Command, 15 Apr 1944
Eastern Air Command, 24 Aug 1944
Combat Cargo Task Force, 14 Sep 1944
Fourteenth Air Force, 20 Dec 1944
Combat Cargo Task Force, 30 Jan 1945
Tenth Air Force, 24 Aug-Dec 1945
512 Troop Carrier Wing, 2 Sep 1949-1 Apr 1951
512 Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Jun 1952-14 Apr 1959
512 Airlift Wing, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1944-1945
C-46, 1945
C-46, 1949-1951
AT-7, 1949-1951
AT-11, 1949-1951
C-46, 1952-1957
C-119, 1957-1959
C-5, 1992

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Robert J. Rentz, 21 Apr 1944
Lt Col Walter P. Briggs, 28 Apr 1945
Maj Samuel B. Ward, 18 Aug 1945
Maj Maurice D. Watson, 9 Sep 1945
Maj Wilbur B. Sprague, 18 Sep 1945
Col J. H. Snyder, 24 Nov 1945
Capt Dixon M. Jordan, 29 Nov-24 Dec 1945
Col Edgar S. Davis, 2 Sep 1949-1 Apr 1951
Unkn, 14 Jun 1958-1958
Col Carl F. Hynek Jr, by Jan 1959-14 Apr 1959
Lt Col Thomas C. W. Keitel, 1 Aug 1992

Lt Col Charles E. Corbett Jr., 20 Jun 2001
Lt Col Donald W. Sloan, 12 Aug 2001-unkn
Col D. Scott Durham, Aug 2011
Col William H. Gutermuth
Col Michael A. DeSantis, 21 Jul 2019

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
India-Burma
China Defensive
Central Burma
China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Meritorious Unit Award
1 Oct 2004-30 Sep 2005

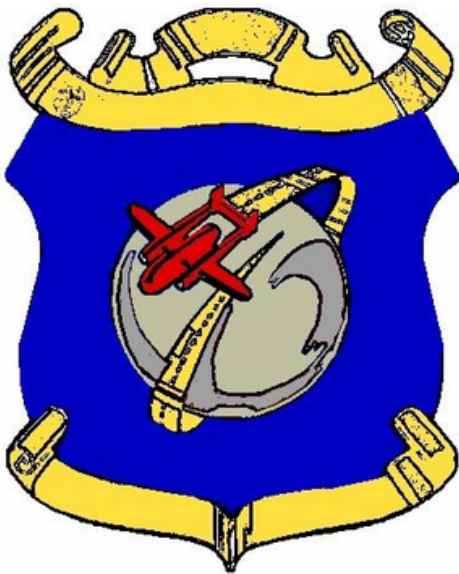
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995
1 Sep 1996-31 Aug 1998
1 Oct 2000-30 Sep 2002
1 Oct 2002-30 Sep 2004
1 Oct 2008-30 Sep 2010

EMBLEM



1 Combat Cargo Group emblem: On a golden orange disc a caricatured rabbit's face affront (white face, brown ears) superimposed upon the figure "1" and flanked by the letters "C", all white outlined black.



512 Troop Carrier Group, Medium emblem: On a shield azure, over a sphere argent, with shading of the field, a stylized aircraft gulls, with highlights of the second, its road-like jet stream encircling the sphere or, shaded gulls, with center dash-like markings and all outlines of the first. (Approved 21 Jan 1958.)



512 Operations Group emblem: The group will use the wing emblem with the group designation in the scroll (Approved, 21 Dec 1993)

Per bend sinister Celeste and Azure, a sphere with axis bendwise sinister Argent, gridlined Sable surmounted by a beveled flight symbol ascending bendwise quartered Gules and Or, trailing an orbital ring enveloping the sphere, all between three mullets, one in dexter chief, one in sinister flank, and one in base; all within a diminished bordure of the last. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "512 OPERATIONS GROUP" in Blue 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 two shades of blue symbolize night and day, indicating the Wing's constant preparedness, providing augmentation in the form of aircrews, maintenance, and aerial port operations to active military airlift wings. The flight symbol represents the association

between active duty and reserve forces. The flight symbol with contrail around the globe describes the speed of deployment of the unit's airlift capability. The three stars are also indicative of unit capability. (Approved, 8 Dec 2022)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Constituted as 1 Combat Cargo Group on 11 Apr 1944 and activated on 15 Apr. Equipped with C-47's.

In early April, 1944 men began reporting to Bowman Field in Louisville, as members of the 1 Combat Cargo Group. Here the men would learn that they would be flying the Douglas C-47A's in the CBI (China-Burma-India Theater). While at Bowman Field a complete training program was developed, which was to refresh flying crews in all aviation techniques (these included aircraft operation, navigation, meteorology, instrument flight, and others) The ground support personnel were also sent to school to refresh their knowledge in all duties (these included among others, radio operation and repair, aircraft and engine maintenance and others). On April 15, 1944 the 1 Combat Cargo Group was officially activated.

Each Squadron of the 1 Combat Cargo Group, (1, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Combat Cargo Squadrons) was assigned its own separate Airdrome Squadron, whose function was to perform all necessary ground operations (Cook, MPs, Mechanics, etc.)

A major goal of the flight training program was to insure that each pilot would have an average of 160 hours as Pilot in command and to insure he was instrument rated. Hopefully, each Co-pilot would also be checked out as a first pilot prior to overseas embarkation.

Training began, and was moving along with great results. There were few accidents and the moral of the men was high. Then on May 4 1944, the training schedule was handed setback by the unexpected demand that the group supply 50 pilots and 50 copilots, (my dad, William J. Bielauskas included), to the Bond Project , then forming at Morrison Field in West Palm Beach Florida. These 100 pilots and copilots would form the backbone of the 3rd Combat Cargo Group, which was hastily being organized for immediate overseas deployment. Training all but stopped for the 1 Group while transferring these 100 officers. Finally on May 9, 1944 the 100 officers and their equipment were flown to Bowman Field in eight 1 Combat Cargo Group C-47s and aircraft from the Glider Tow Detachment at Stout Field, Indianapolis. After the aircraft's returned and the group was again up to assigned strength the training program resumed.

The Groups training stressed the need for proficient at night flying, which was an added safety factor, since the Japanese limited most of their air activity to daylight flying. This procedure, not only added to the safety to the planes and their crews, but it would allow the planes to be made available for daytime maintenance. Importance was also stressed on good air-dropping techniques, short field, and soft field landings. Add to that, the crews were reminded that they would be flying in perhaps the worst weather conditions to be found on the face of the earth (the Asian

Monsoons). This fact itself, led to a very intensive instrument flight training program for the air crews, and it would later prove invaluable.

The training continued until, finally on August 1, 1944 the Group was considered finally ready for combat operations. Between August 3-5, 1944 the Group proceeded to Baer Field, in Fort Wayne, Indiana and there was readied for overseas movement.

The 1 Combat Cargo Groups one hundred C-47's began the trip to India by flying first from Baer Field to Syracuse, New York, then to Dow Field in Bangor, Maine, and then over the Atlantic ocean to Gander Field, Newfoundland. From Gander, the Group flew to Lagen Field in the Azores, and then to Marakech, French Morocco. Steadily flying in an easterly direction, they flew on to Cairo, Egypt, Abadan in Iran, and finally Karachi, India. From Karachi they then went to Agra, then Gaya, and finally, during the last week of August 1944, the four squadrons, plus group headquarters, arrived at Sylhet. From Karachi 13 of the Groups C-47s towed gliders full of lumber. These gliders were released over Asansal, close to Sylhet.

The 1 Combat Cargo Group began air operations on September 1, 1944 when the British 177th Wing at Agartala requested that the group begin to fly reinforcements between Imphal and Comilla and evacuated the wounded to rear area hospitals.

While in the CBI the, the 1 Combat Cargo Groups four Squadrons called many places home. There were times when one of the Groups Squadrons would be in China, another Squadron would be in Burma and yet another Squadron would be in India. On November 21, 1944 the Group made it's first move, the 1 and 4th Squadrons with it's 344th Airdrome Squadron (ADS) moved to airstrip at Tulihal, India. The 3rd Squadron along with it's 346th Airdrome Squadron (ADS) moved to the airstrip at Sentinel Hill at Tulihal. The 2nd Squadron and their 345th Airdrome Squadron moved to their new home at Imphal. The Headquarter contingent of the Group finally moved to Charry Village at Tulihal on December 9, 1944. The 347th Airdrome Squadron finally arrived at Tulihal in early December 1944, finally the whole group was in theater.

The Group continued supporting the British units who were fighting in the Chin Hills in the Arakan and Chindwin River sections of Burma. Returning Group flights carried the casualties from the fighting to the hospital at Comilla. Initially the entire Group participated in this operation. On December 21, 1944 the Group received orders which would send the 1 and 2nd squadrons along with the 344th Airdrome Squadron to Tsuying, China. The 4th Squadron with 63 members of the 345th Airdrome Squadron flew to Chengkung, China via the Himalayas. The 3rd Squadron along with the remaining 345th Airdrome Squadron personnel remained at Tulihal and continued supporting the British. In a effort to assist with the before mentioned move, eight C-46 of the 4th Combat Cargo Group assisted in moving the 1, 2nd and 4th Squadrons to their China destinations. When the move was complete the 4th Group C-46's returned to their home bases. The 1 Groups, Squadrons which were now stationed in China came under operational control of the 14th Air Force. This was to set a pattern for this group until the end of the war.

During the Group's first 50 days (December 13, 1944 - January 31, 1945) in China, the Group recorded 11,207 hours flown, during which 23,133 Chinese troops plus 3,128 other passengers were transported. The two squadrons consumed 1,012,000 gallons of aviation gas in this effort. Twelve aircraft were lost, or destroyed, along with eight crews killed or wounded, due to either accidents or enemy action. While the 1 Combat Cargo Squadron which had remained in China, was ordered to direct their main effort directly to the Hsian area of North-Central China. Hsian was one of the few remaining Chinese air bases in fighter range of primary Japanese targets. During their spring offensive, the Japanese advanced toward Hsian from two directions, the southeast and the northeast. Their goal was to overcome the Chinese army who was defending the vital airbase.

At times, up to thirteen aircraft of the 1 Combat Cargo Squadron operated from Hsinching under control of the 312th fighter wing. Their main task was to supply the fighters and medium bombers that were as flying from Hsian in either offensive or defensive operations. At other times, up to fifteen aircraft of the 1 Combat Cargo Squadron would be based at Liangshan, while there they operated under control of the Chinese-American composite Wing. They flew missions in defense of the Hsian area to Peishyi, Ankang, Enshish, Kunming, Yunnanyi, Chichiang, Hanchung, and Valley Field. Valley Field was located behind the enemy lines to the east, but even that didn't deter the 1 Combat Cargo Squadron, as they flew sorties into the field almost every day! This total operation was a complete success and by the end of April, the job was done without a single major accident.

Some other interesting statistics were revealed during the British push to Rangoon, the 1 Group air crews had dropped 203 parachutists and during that time evacuated 1,573 prisoners of war. On the down side of the ledger, the 1 Group lost 40 airplanes in combat. Seven additional aircraft were lost to accidents, not related to combat.

At the end of September 1945, the 1 Combat Cargo Group was redesignated as the 512 Troop Carrier Group. Its four Squadrons were redesignated as the 326th, 327th, 328th and 329th Troop Carrier Squadrons. The balance of the Group was finally rotated back to the United States in December 1945. The Group was inactivated on 24 December 1945.

Between Sep 1949 and Mar 1951, and again from Jun 1952-Apr 1959, trained as a Reserve troop carrier group at bases in Pennsylvania and Delaware. In Aug 1992, activated in the Reserve to coordinate operations of C-5 squadrons. Personnel and squadrons of the group participated in various contingency and humanitarian airlift operations, some to Asia and Africa.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 16 Jun 2020

Updated: 8 Mar 2023

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.