

## 776 EXPEDITIONARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

776 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 19 May 1943  
Activated, 1 Aug 1943  
Inactivated, 31 Jul 1945  
Redesignated 776 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 14 Nov 1945  
Redesignated 776 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 15 Dec 1952  
Activated, 1 Feb 1953  
Redesignated 776 Troop Carrier Squadron, Assault, 1 Dec 1958  
Redesignated 776 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 8 Jul 1963  
Redesignated 776 Troop Carrier Squadron, 1 Jan 1967  
Redesignated 776 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Aug 1967  
Inactivated, 31 Oct 1975  
Redesignated 776 Expeditionary Airlift Squadron and converted to provisional status, 3 May 2002

#### STATIONS

Wendover Field, UT, 1 Aug 1943  
Gowen Field, ID, 22 Aug 1943  
Pocatello AAFld, ID, 2 Oct 1943-9 Feb 1944  
Pantanella Airfield, Italy, 10 Apr 1944  
Gioia, Italy, 20 Apr 1944  
Pantanella Airfield, Italy, 1 Jun 1944-6 Jun 1945  
Waller Field, Trinidad, 15 Jun-31 Jul 1945  
Lawson AFB, GA, 1 Feb 1953  
Pope AFB, NC, 16 Sep 1954-18 Oct 1954  
Pope AFB, NC, 3 May 1955-26 Dec 1965

Chuan Kang AB, Taiwan, 1 Apr 1966  
Clark AB, Philippines, 15 Nov 1973-31 Oct 1975

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Rhein Main AB, Germany, 25 Oct 1954-1 May 1955

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

464 Bombardment Group, 1 Aug 1943-31 Jul 1945  
464 Troop Carrier Group, 1 Feb 1953  
464 Troop Carrier Wing, 11 Nov 1957  
315 Troop Carrier Group, Assault, 1 Jul 1963  
315 Air Division, 26 Dec 1965  
314 Troop Carrier (later, 314 Tactical Airlift) Wing, 25 Mar 1966  
374 Tactical Airlift Wing, 31 May 1971-31 Oct 1975  
Air Combat Command to activate or inactivate at any time after 3 May 2002

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-24, 1943-1945  
C-46, 1953-1954  
C-119, 1953-1958  
C-123, 1958-1964  
C-130, 1964-1975

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Harold E. Blehm, 1 Aug 1943  
LTC William H. Reddell, 22 Jul 1944  
LTC John W. Nance, Dec 1944- May 1945  
Unkn, 1 Feb 1953  
Maj Roland Benson  
LTC Benjamin C. Warren, Jul 1954  
LTC Joseph F. Mistrot, 31 Dec 1955  
LTC George B. Herndon, 30 Oct 1957  
LTC Robert V. Maggart, 12 Dec 1960  
Maj Thomas G. Tharp, 7 Apr 1961  
LTC Howard E. Reaves, 21 Apr 1961  
LTC Rector C. Dacus, by 31 Dec 1962  
LTC Charles W. Borders, 8 Jul 1963  
LTC Homer Q. Stephens, 11 Jun 1964  
LTC Eugene E. Hurst, 1 Nov 1965  
LTC George Perbetsky, 11 Jan 1967  
LTC James H. Marable, 19 Jun 1967  
LTC Clyde G. Miller, Jan 1968  
LTC George Perbetsky, 27 Mar 1969  
LTC Arthur S. Cooper, by Dec 1970

LTC Roger W. Johnson, by Dec 1971  
LTC James L. Jarrett, 15 Jan 1972  
LTC William E. Porter 25 May 1973  
LTC Jimmy L. Maturo, 27 Dec 1973  
LTC Alfred N. Luttrell, 1 Sep-31 Oct 1975

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Air Offensive, Europe

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Vienna, Austria, 8 Jul 1944

Pardubice, Czechoslovakia, [24] Aug 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

1 Nov 1967-31 Dec 1969

12 Feb-17 May 1975.

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

28 Nov 1961-1 May 1963

Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation

21 Jul-15 Aug 1972

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Nov 1967-31 Dec 1969

## **EMBLEM**



On a white disc edged Air Force blue, a white cloud formation issuing from base, edged Air Force blue; issuing from the cloud and radiating to chief, three Air Force golden yellow lightning flashes edged gold brown, two in dexter, one in sinister; all surmounted by a red lion rampant, outlines and details black, wearing an Air Force golden yellow crown, outlines and details golden brown. (Approved, 9 Jul 1959)

**MOTTO**

KING OF THEM ALL

**NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Combat MTO ETO, 30 Apr 1944-26 Apr 1945.

Combat operations in Mediterranean and European Theaters of operation, Feb 1944-May 1945. Moved to Trinidad in Jun 1945 and inactivated on 31 Jul 1945. Served briefly in South Vietnam, July 1963. Activated as a Troop Carrier Squadron and in Apr 1964 carried the casket and body of General Douglas MacArthur from Washington, DC, to Norfolk, Virginia, for burial. In Nov and Dec 1964 participated in operation "Dragon Rouge", evacuating refugees of civil war from the Congo. In Mar 1965, participated in Operation Steep Hill to protect Alabama citizens during civil rights demonstrations. Rotated crews in and out of Southeast Asia and the Congo in 1965 and participated in humanitarian airlift during revolutionary crisis in the Dominican Republic. Moved to Japan in Dec 1965 and conducted combat airlift into Vietnam, transporting troops, equipment, and supplies to various bases in Southeast Asia, including resupply operations to Khe Sanh and the A Shau Valley during the first half of 1968. Crews rotated to Cam Ranh Bay and Tan Son Nhut to fly shuttle missions. As Saigon fell in Apr 1975, airlifted Vietnamese orphans from the city during Operation Baby Lift.

The initial Hercules was commanded by Maj. Robert F. Wallace of the 776th Squadron. Major Wallace made the planned run-in, raising considerable tracer fire near the drop zone and taking damage in the rudder area, but releasing the load. After talking by radio with the airborne forward air controller on the scene, the second crew decided to approach from a different direction in the hope of taking the enemy by surprise. Heavy haze made it difficult to spot the soccer field, and the crew turned off for a second try. On the second run, thirty seconds from the release point, the enemy let loose, saturating the air over the drop zone using barrage techniques. Hits penetrated the cargo compartment and cracked the pilot's windscreen. Machine gun fire killed the flight engineer and wounded the navigator and copilot. The cargo (155-mm howitzer and 81-mm mortar ammunition) smoldered in intense heat from a ruptured hot-air line. The loadmasters jettisoned the ammunition and fought recurrent flames with hand extinguishers. With two engines out and the landing gear manually lowered, the crew nursed the plane back to Tan Son Nhut. For saving the aircraft and their wounded crewmates, Capt. William R. Caldwell and SSgt Charles L. Shaub, both of the 776th Squadron, earned Air Force Crosses. U.S. Army officers reported that, as could best be ascertained, of the twenty-six tons dropped by the two C-130s on April 15 nothing was recovered by the defenders."

During the early 1970s the 776 TAS carried out missions all over Pacific area, including Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, Korea and many other countries. Missions were also flown to many of the islands in the Pacific. All types of cargo was transported. Although much of the cargo was general, fuel and explosives were also hauled. Passengers were transported and medical patients were evacuated to hospital facilities. Passenger missions often included foreign nationals and sometimes prisoners of war. The C130s were often used to transport those killed in action from remote airfields to the larger air bases. In times when a defensive position was surrounded and no supplies could get in, the C130s would fly through heavy anti-aircraft and ground fire to drop needed supplies to the friendlies on the ground.

During 1970 and 1971 the 776 TAS was operating out of CCK, Taiwan with Det 1 at Ton Son Nhut, Vietnam and Det 2 at U-Tapao, Thailand. Crews were rotated to the detachments on a TDY basis. There was also a shuttle operating out of Bangkok, Thailand. As the U.S. involvement in the war began to wind down, Det 1 in Ton Sun Nhut was closed down and the 776 crews began operations out of Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. Missions were still being flown into Vietnam, but no [U.S.] C-130 crews were assigned TDY to Vietnam.

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 29 Jul 2020

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.

Unit yearbook. *464 Troop Carrier Wing, Lawson AFB, GA. 1954.* Army and Navy Publishing Co. Baton Rouge, LA. 1954.

Unit yearbook. *464 Troop Carrier Wing, Pope AFB, NC. 1965.*