

777 EXPEDITIONARY AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

777 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 19 May 1943
Activated, 1 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 31 Jul 1945
Redesignated 777 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 14 Nov 1945
Redesignated 777 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 15 Dec 1952
Activated, 1 Feb 1953
Redesignated 777 Troop Carrier Squadron, Assault, 1 Dec 1958
Redesignated 777 Tactical Airlift Squadron
Inactivated
Redesignated 777 Expeditionary Airlift Squadron

STATIONS

Wendover Field, UT, 1 Aug 1943
Gowen Field, ID, 22 Aug 1943
Pocatello AAFld, ID, 2 Oct 1943-9 Feb 1944
Pantarella Airfield, Italy, 30 Mar 1944
Gioia, Italy, 20 Apr 1944
Pantarella 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
Pope AFB, NC, 11 Sep 1954-31 Aug 1971

ASSIGNMENTS

464 Bombardment Group, 1 Aug 1943-31 Jul 1945
464 Troop Carrier Group, 1 Feb 1953
464 Troop Carrier Wing, 11 Nov 1957

WEAPON SYSTEMS

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

COMMANDERS

Maj Charles Poust

HONORS

Service Streamers

American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Europe
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Vienna, Austria, 8 Jul 1944
Pardubice, Czechoslovakia, [24] Aug 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award
28 Nov 1961-1 May 1963

EMBLEM



777 Bombardment Squadron

777 Expeditionary Airlift Squadron: On a disc Argent, a double-headed dragon, heads facing each other, Azure detailed and fimbriated Sable garnished of the first; eyed, langued and enflamed Gules dented Or, issuant from chief four lightning bolts two in dexter and two in sinister converging to a point at mid-chief above the dragon's head all of the last, all within a narrow border Blue. Attached below the disk, a White scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "777 EXPEDITIONARY AIRLIFT SQ" 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 double-headed dragon represents the strength and unity of the Squadron. The lightning bolts symbolize the unit as an integral part of the United States Air Force. (Approved, 16 Apr 1958)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

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

The idea of moving a second C-123 squadron to Vietnam came up at the Secretary of Defense Conference of February 19, 1962, in Hawaii. During a discussion of the matter, General Anthis assured Secretary McNamara that the C-123 was proving to be a most suitable transport for operations in Vietnam. In a message to CINCPAC, dated 12 Mar MACV officially recommended the sending of a second unit, citing as the basis for their recommendation high Mule Train flying during the summer. The Air Staff challenged the need for more transport aircraft in Vietnam, and also opposed a separate MACV request for a U.S. Caribou company. The MACV logistics section on May 22 asserted that Mule Train capabilities were becoming saturated, and indicated that transports would be placed on daily strip alert for tactical missions. Four days later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed movement of another sixteen C-123s to the Pacific.

The deployment order came as no surprise to the air and ground crews of the 777th Troop Carrier Squadron at Pope Air Force Base which had been selected for the move. Aircraft had already received Mule Train modifications, so that final preparations for the move could be advanced for departure on May 28. The movement to the Far East was designated as Sawbuck II, and resembled in execution the earlier Mule Train moves. Five MATS transports hauled the ground crewmen, although one aircraft island-hopped with the Providers and carried an enroute maintenance team. The first Provider echelon reached Clark on June 8; four aircraft and crews then went on to Bangkok on the eleventh to provide air transport service in Thailand while awaiting the arrival of a Caribou company. The remaining twelve 123s flew to Da Nang during the next four days.

In view of the crowding at Tan Son Nhut, Da Nang was selected as a second operating base in Vietnam. The latter possessed good airfield facilities, seaport facilities, and a location favorable for operating over the northern part of South Vietnam. The 777th aircraft at Da Nang, like Mule Train, were placed under the operational control of the 2d ADVON through the Joint Chiefs airlift branch. The Bangkok C-123 detachment came under the operational control of the Air Force component commander, in Thailand. Administratively, all Mule Train, Ranch Hand, and Sawbuck II personnel were organized under the Tactical Air Force Squadron, Provisional 2, based at Pope with members assigned temporary duty in Southeast Asia. For the purpose of consolidating maintenance and supply, the Sawbuck II ground crews were moved to Tan Son Nhut in September. Aircraft and crews thereafter rotated to Da Nang.

During April 1963 the arrival of the 777 Troop Carrier Squadron with sixteen C-123s augmented the airlift of the twenty-nine C-123s at Tan Son Nhut Air Base to support the US Special Forces in Vietnam.

Airmen from the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Balad AB, Iraq, used two C-130 Hercules aircraft to drop thirty-one Container Delivery System bundles over a location in southwest Iraq in September, providing needed supplies to Iraqi border training teams supported by the US Army's 82nd Sustainment Battalion. The supplies on this airdrop included ice, tires, concertina wire, and food. These regular airdrops keep convoys off the roads, the traditional way the Army delivers supplies, and decrease the number of ground personnel needed to secure an airfield. This method is safer, not only for the Army, but also for the aircrews delivering the supplies. 2007.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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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.