

821 MEDICAL AIR EVACUATION SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

821 Medical Air Evacuation Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Activated Jan. 1944, left for Camp Patrick Henry, Va. May 44 arrived at Hampton Roads port of embarkation. A swing band serenaded them and the Red Cross offered coffee as they boarded the USS General George M. Randall, which was on its maiden voyage. May 27, 44, passed through the Panama Canal, May 30, '44, crossed the Equator and had a session in King Neptune's Court face painting, hair cutting, and a shampoo of old coffee grounds and left over pancake mix. A dunking in the tank made them fully fledged Shellbacks! June 13, 44, they

crossed the International Dateline and June 14, 1944 never existed for them! June 21, '44, they reached Fremantle, Australia, where they were given shore leave and an opportunity to meet the friendly Aussies. July 5, 44, they arrived in Bombay, India which was during the monsoon season. The dull, dismal dirty dock crowded with dirty, gaping, emotionless Indians was uninspiring! They boarded a train in Bombay at nearby Ballard Station enroute to Calcutta. They reached Howrah Station at Calcutta July 9, '44, welcomed by an Army band playing American tunes.

They were under the impression they were going to China. Aug. 8, 44, they left by air for Chabua, India where they were billeted with the 803rd MAES until their future home was carved out of the jungle at Ledo by the Naga head hunters and three advance enlisted men. They shared air evac run, TDY, and hospital duties with the 803rd. By Sept. 44, the 821st had evacuated 1,449 patients. At the close of Oct. 44, 1,289 patients had been evacuated for the month with 1,806 being evacuated for the month of Nov. Dec. 2, 1944, they reached their new home at Ledo, a neat and pleasantly situated area on a knoll overlooking the airstrip. In the distance, they could see the lofty peaks of the Himalaya Mountains, behind them beautiful jungle covered hills. No longer were they to be grateful for handouts from other units. Their job was to evacuate wounded and sick from Myitkyina, Tinkawk Saka, Shingbuiyang, Sahmaw, Mauler, Moauk, Nansin and Katha or any place our planes flew.

Dec. '44 was their biggest month for they brought out 4,575 patients, their first month with the 10th AF. Their total to Dec. '44 was 9,130 patients. Dec. 44, they were entitled to wear a bronze star on their Asiatic theater service ribbon. The flight nurses and medical technicians each received an Air Medal. One DFC and two Soldiers' Medals were also awarded. There were numerous close calls but no major casualties.

Flights A-B-D flew with the 10th AF in Burma, and Flight C with the 14th AF in China. In August, '45 they flew into Japan held territory to evacuate POWs of the Japanese, some were the heroes of the "River Kwai," some women and children and some had been imprisoned four years, since the attack on Pearl Harbor. By June '45, only Flight C of the 821st was active. When the flight nurses were removed from the CBI air evac duties were left to medical technicians aided by medical officers from various bases. It is an amazing tribute to the skill, resourcefulness and devotion of all air evac personnel that despite crossing the "Hump," weather conditions, the number transported, and the varieties of injured and sick, not a single death was reported.

The 821st left Ledo for Karachi late in 1945 arriving NY through the Suez Canal.

821st Sqdn. Central Burma (A, B and D flights, Hq only); China Offensive (C flight only); India-Burma.

821st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron (Less Det) (629 NY) – Chabua, India

Lineage: Activated 1943 as 821st Medical Air Evacuation Transport Sq, redesignated 1943 as 821st Medical Air Evacuation Sq, active through 1 May 45.

Assignments: 349th Air Evacuation Gp - Jun 43, Unknown - Jul 44, India-China Wg, Air Tpt Cd - Nov 44, Tenth AF - unknown, India-China Division, Air Tpt Cd.

Stations: Bowman Fld KY 1943-1943, unknown -Jul 44, Bombay -Jul 44, Chabua -Dec 44, Ledo - unknown, later may have been at Hickam Fld.

Formed at Bowan Field, Louisville, KY. Traveled aboard the Gen. George M. Randall via Newport, Panama Canal, Perth, Bombay, then via train to Calcutta, Kanchrapara, Chabua, Ledo.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 29 Jul 2020

Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.