

921 TACTICAL AIRLIFT GROUP

MISSION

LINEAGE

921 Troop Carrier Group, Medium established and activated, 28 Dec 1962
Organized in the Reserve, 17 Jan 1963
Redesignated 921 Military Airlift Group, 1 Jul 1966
Ordered to active service, 26 Jan 1968
Relieved from active duty, 1 Jun 1969
Redesignated 921 Tactical Airlift Group, 29 Jul 1971
Inactivated, 1 Nov 1974

STATIONS

Kelly AFB, TX, 17 Jan 1963-1 Nov 1974

ASSIGNMENTS

Continental Air Command, 28 Dec 1963
433 Troop Carrier Wing (later Tactical Airlift Wing), 17 Jan 1963
349 Military Airlift Wing, 26 Jan 1968
433 Tactical Airlift Wing (later 433 Military Airlift Wing, 433 Tactical Airlift Wing), 2 Jun 1969 – 1 Nov 1974

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-124, 1963–1971
C-130, 1971–1974

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Fitting in Beef Broth units with the Chiefs strictures, insofar as possible, General Marchbanks selected the 305th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Selfridge AFB, Michigan; the 938th Military Airlift Group and its collocated 349th Military Airlift Wing at Hamilton AFB, California; the 921st Military Airlift Group at Kelly AFB, Texas; the 941st Military Airlift Group at McChord AFB, Washington; the 918th Military Airlift Group and its collocated 435th Military Airlift Wing at Dobbins AFB, Georgia; and the 904th Military Airlift Group at Stewart AFB, New York, the only unit selected outside the Beef Broth listing.

The conversion process continued with the transformation of the 921st and 938th TCGs from C-119s to C-124s. The 938th had, in fact, been chosen earlier to convert but plans changed and the process didn't go into effect until 1 July under provisions set down by Special Order G-55. For the 938th, the conversion process was easier than it was for the 921st because the former unit had already begun making the necessary changes.

1966 Beginning in January, the Alamo Wing's, 921st Troop Carrier Group (67th Troop Carrier Squadron) began losing the C-119s and began the transition to C-124 "Globemaster" aircraft. During March to early April, the last C-119 (#636) left the Alamo Wing with a 67 TCS crew flying the aircraft to the Aircraft Storage Depot, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

1966 Along with the new equipment came the need for new expertise, and the C-124 put the 921st aircrews back in the classroom. The pilots completed the heavy-duty transition unit (HDTU) school at Tinker AFB, in October. The HDTU was ten weeks of intensive training and study designed to teach aircrews the C-124 system and MAC procedures. One of the C-124 pilots was overheard saying, "Flying a Globemaster is like sitting on your front porch and driving your house."

1967 Operation "Combat Leave" involved both the 921 TCG and the 922 TCG. Combat Leave was the emergency airlift set up by the Continental Air Command to ease transportation woes created by the machinist's strike against five major airlines. The 922d had two C-119s running between Richards Gebaur AFB, Missouri and the East Coast. The 921st flew the West Coast with their C-124s. Combat Leave was the first major personnel airlift to be conducted by the Air Force Reserves.

The 921st Military Airlift Group, which had received C-124s less than a year earlier, had qualified nine combat ready crews capable of flying anywhere in the world. They flew more than four

million-ton miles of cargo in aiding the Southeast Asia conflict. That first flight by the squadron was made from Kelly to Saigon between February and March.

1968 During January, the seizure and detention of the U.S. Navy ship Pueblo made for a busy month for the members of the 921st Military Airlift Group and the 67th Military Airlift Squadron and the 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. The units received recall orders to active duty on the 25th, flying C-124 aircraft. Upon activation, all nine of the C-124 aircraft departed Kelly into the MAC system flying in and out of the Southeast Asia Theater. When the 921st Military Airlift Group recalled and assigned to active duty with the 349th Military Airlift Wing, Hamilton AFB, California, from January through March. The quality did not suffer because the unit still had the classy 922 TAG; only numbers took a beating.

1969 The 921st Military Airlift Group deactivated on 1 June, and returned to command and control of the Alamo Wing after 18 months. Five days after the demobilization of the 921 MAG, the 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, under the command of Captain Charles Kittell, returned to Kelly AFB. The actual welcome home ceremony took place 28 May, so the Wing members could have a few days with their families before returning to their civilian pursuits

A devastating hurricane formed in the Gulf and headed towards the coast. On 17 August, the destructive storm, Hurricane "Camille" struck the Gulf Coast of eastern Louisiana and western Mississippi. The center of the storm passed inland in the Gulfport area. The 921st and 922d flew 21 sorties using three C-124s and four C-119s in support of disaster relief. The units airlifted 33,241 tons of cargo, and logged 62.3 flying hours flown in association with "Camille". Another C-124 loaded to the "gunnels" with a refrigeration van and 20,000 pounds of food flew to the Southeastern Atlantic Coast. Kelly AFB employees donated the biggest portions of these provisions.

1969 In December, Colonel Richard C. Leyda, 921st Military Airlift Group commander, and Major Charles Kittell, 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron commander, attended ceremonies in Washington D.C., honoring commanders from U.S. Armed Forces units recalled to active duty during the "Pueblo Crisis." Following breakfast at the Pentagon with Maj Gen Tom E. Marchbanks, chief of the Air Force Reserve, and former Alamo Wing commander, they proceeded to the White House to meet with President Richard Nixon. President Nixon thanked them for their contributions and outstanding performance in a time of national emergency and directed each commander to convey his personal gratitude to reservists.

1971 The next first for the Alamo Wing came when aircrews joined hands with Wilford Hall Medical Center to airlift a live kidney in a portable preservation unit. This mission saw the involvement of the Wing in the C-130 humanitarian airlift "Mercy Flight" during March, when the 921st TAG transported a live kidney from Lackland AFB to Parkland Hospital in Dallas, Texas. The successful airlift of the body organ to Dallas opened the door to the possibility of worldwide transport of vital organs.

The mission began following the death of a 12-year-old daughter of an Air Force airman. Through a computer read-out obtained from the National Network of Organ Donations, potential recipients

were located at Parkland Hospital and San Antonio Bexar County Hospital. Both of the girls' kidneys were subsequently removed and prepared for movement to the two hospitals.

1971 After an all-out effort, the final unit-manning document showed a streamlined, 922 TAG and the units newly activated 75th Aerial Port Flight on 29 June. Along with this new unit, the 921 TAG also saw activation of the 74th Aerial Port Squadron on 29 June. The command and control rested with Central Air Force Reserve Region, Ellington AFB, Texas.

1976 On 1 July, most of the units assigned to the Alamo Wing assumed the 433d designation. This change accomplished the inactivation of the 921st and activated the Group under the Alamo Wing. The 921 Civil Engineering Flight retained the 921 designation. The 34th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, 68 TAS and the 922d Civil Engineering Squadron also remained the same designation. Effective in October the Headquarters, 433 TAW was reassigned from the Central Air Force Reserve Region to the Fourth Air Force (Reserve), McClellan AFB, California.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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

Kelly AFB, TX, Heritage of Service, Seventy-Five Years of Military Aviation at Kelly Air Force Base, 1916 1991. Office of History, San Antonio Air Logistics Center. Kelly AFB, TX. 1991.