

# 1 INTRANSIENT DEPOT GROUP

## MISSION

## LINEAGE<sup>1</sup>

1 Intransient Depot Group

## STATIONS

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## MOTTO

## OPERATIONS<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

<sup>2</sup> Unit History, *The Ninth Air Force Service Command in the European Theater of Operations, a Pictorial Review*, The Air Force Aid Society, 1945.

TAKE a supply outfit which often moves so fast it outruns its own supplies, add a courier service which sends jeeps bouncing all over liberated Europe to the tune of over 2,300 miles per day, and throw in a C.O. who races around to his far-flung installations in a jeep named "The Flying Greek." The complete product is the IX Air Force Service Command's Intransit Depot Group.

Personnel of the Group hit the European beachheads on D plus one and have now fanned out all over Europe, furnishing supplies and equipment to the world's most insatiable and fastest moving customer the Ninth Air Force.

Commanding Officer, Colonel Frank P. McCue (who is not Greek, but his driver is, hence the words "Flying Greek" emblazoned in Greek characters on his jeep), Waterbury, Conn., will tell you that the Group Heavy equipment is unloaded from a craft at the Omaha beach. Thunderbolt engines are being placed in crates prior to overhaul. learned things the hard way. Around a nucleus of invasion-wise veterans of the African, Sicilian and Italian campaigns was built an organization which, of necessity, was top heavy with green replacements. The problems which began long before D Day had to be surmounted by trial and error. The rulebook was tossed aside by the quick movement of a tactical air force which was here today and gone tomorrow. And the ever changing equipment added more headaches.

When the first two Intransit Depot squadrons went in on D plus one, they were non-combatant in name only. German mortars and 88s failed to make any distinction between combatants and the other varieties. As a result, the boys took a nice pasting along with the dough feet. Since the going was rather rough, the squadrons took no equipment on the initial landings. Besides dodging bullets, they kept busy establishing British soldiers (wearing berets) watch unloading of equipment.

Tills train is hauling a quantity of high octane aviation gasoline. technical supply, bomb and ammunition dumps. Four days later, when their equipment came, they started handling 100 octane gas and special oils for the Army. a decidedly extra-curricular job. Gradually they assumed the work for which they were originally intended supplying the Ninth Air Force. Their first big assignment was airplane engines, which were a critical item at the time and, since there were no servicing facilities available, the Group handled all repairable salvage.

After the initial landings on the French coast and in spite of the dust and slowly retreating Germans, a smoothly functioning organization was rounded out. As the beachhead widened and the Group split, the first courier run was set up between Omaha and Utah beaches. This was the first part of a vast network which came to cover France and Belgium, traveling more than 16,000 miles weekly.

When the tight beachhead finally burst, sending the Allied armies slicing through France, there started a gigantic game of cops and robbers. The Yanks were chasing the Germans; the Ninth Air Force was following the armies, and the Service Command's Intransit Depot Group was pursuing the Ninth Air Force (and often getting to advanced fields ahead of the combat units). Loaded with all supplies peculiar to an air force, they made huge jumps because such major moves

were imperative. One day, under combat conditions, the Group processed in excess of 325 aircraft, using only 75 men. Its units were self-sufficient even to cooks, food, and field ranges. But the men went so fast they outran their own supplies. Modern war has seen many peculiar things, but the spectacle of a supply outfit outdistancing its own supplies is a situation hard to beat.

But if their own supplies couldn't catch them, neither Ammunition for Ninth Air Force airplanes is loaded into trucks. "Jerricans." These gasoline containers were highly critical item. could the Germans. Once, in Belgium, an Intransit Depot Group squadron moved into a newly captured airfield at noon. At 1400 hours, the Ninth Air Force pulled out. At 14-30 the squadron packed up and left to continue its pursuit of the Air Force. At 1700 hours, the Luftwaffe pasted the strip with surprising fury and strength-but too late.

The Group has had more than one brush with the Germans. A company of Jerries, left behind in the big retreat, sneaked one night into the Group's area and almost got away with enough gasoline to take them back to the Fatherland. They were discovered, however, and their proposed junket was delayed indefinitely. In the Falaise Gap, a sergeant leading his convoy was flagged down by a French woman who pointed excitedly to a small orchard adjacent to her farm. The sergeant got the point immediately and assembled his It was no easy job to move crated heavy machinery from beach. A "duckload" of ammunition arrives at one of the beachheads. men for a little hunt. Sure enough, six Herrenvolk were planted behind some of the largest available apple trees. After a brief skirmish, four came out with hands held high, but the remaining two, being of a more tenacious disposition, shot it out with automatic pistols for more than an hour before they too threw in the towel. The "non-combatant" troops turned in their catch to some infantrymen and moved on.

The IX Air Force Service Command's Intransit Depot Group has been compared to the blocking backs on a football team. This is true, because had it not done its job well, the Ninth Air Force could not have functioned. And without air superiority-well, you now the rest. And to clinch the argument, the record speaks for itself-the cold but eloquent fact that not a single mission of the Ninth Air Force has ever been cancelled for want of supplies.