

17th AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE¹

17th Air Corps Ferrying Squadron constituted, 18 Feb 1942

Activated, 27 Apr 1942

Redesignated 17th Transport Squadron, 19 Mar 1943

Disbanded, 31 Oct 1943

Reconstituted and redesignated 17th Air Transport Squadron, Medium, 22 Mar 1954

Activated, 18 Jul 1954

Redesignated 17th Air Transport Squadron, Heavy, 18 Jun 1958

Redesignated 17th Military Airlift Squadron, 8 Jan 1966

Inactivated, 8 Apr 1969

Activated, 1 Aug 1987

Redesignated 17th Airlift Squadron, 1 Oct 1991

STATIONS

Hamilton Field, California, 27 Apr 1942–31 Oct 1943

Charleston AFB, South Carolina, 18 Jul 1954–8 Apr 1969

Charleston AFB, South Carolina, 1 Aug 1987

ASSIGNMENTS

Army Air Forces Ferrying (later, Air Transport) Command, 27 Apr 1942

11th Ferrying (later, 11th Transport) Group, 28 Jul 1942–31 Oct 1943

1608th Air Transport Group, 18 Jul 1954

¹ Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.

1608th Air Transport Wing, 18 Jan 1963
437th Military Airlift Wing, 8 Jan 1966–8 Apr 1969
437th Military Airlift Wing, 1 Aug 1987
437th Operations Group, 1 Oct 1991

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-46, 1942–1943
C-47, 1942–1943
C-54, 1954–1958
C-124, 1958–1969
C-141, 1987

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Clarence Kreutter, #1957
Lt Col O. J. Baird, #1971
Lt Col Gary L. Pudwill
Lt Col Tommy J. McClam, 7 Apr 1993
Lt Col Ronald R. Ladnier, 9 Jun 1993

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War II
American Theater

Campaign Streamers

Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Panama, 1989–1990

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jan 1963–1 Feb 1964
11 Jul 1966–10 Jul 1967
11 Jul 1967–10 Jul 1968
11 Jul 1968–8 Apr 1969
1 Jul 1988–30 Jun 1989
1 Jul 1989–30 Jun 1990
21 Sep 1989–31 Oct 1989
1 Jul 2011–30 Jun 2012

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm
1 Apr 1966–8 Apr 1969

EMBLEM



On an Air Force Blue globe, grid lines White, issuing from the top of a White scroll, two hands flesh tone, winged at the wrists White, bearing supplies or cargo Air Force golden Yellow; outlines and details Air Force Blue throughout. (Approved, 27 Oct 1959)

MOTTO

ANYTHING, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

OPERATIONS²

Air Transport and aircraft delivery to the Pacific Theater. Worldwide Airlift beginning 1954.

By 1968, the unit was deeply involved in providing airlift support for the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam conflict. During the last half of the year, the C-124s of the 17th ATS were flying more hours in support of the Vietnam conflict than they did during the first six months; C-141 As were flying fewer hours in support of the conflict than they did during the first half of the year.

Missions to Southeast Asia, 1964–1969.

Supported operations in Panama, 18–29 Dec 1989, and Southwest Asia, Aug 1990–Dec 1991.

When the full production decision was made the first squadron of jets was already operational. Since 14 June 1993, with aircraft P-6, aircraft were delivered directly to the 17th Airlift Squadron (AS) of the 437th Airlift Wing (AW) at Charleston AFB, South Carolina. On 17 January 1995 the 17th AS was declared operational with 12 aircraft, 48 crews, and a fully trained cadre of maintenance personnel. The 437th AW continued receiving C-17s to convert two other squadrons from C-141Bs.

A Charleston AFB crew flew C-17 #89-1190 (P-4) for 4.2 hours at Edwards AFB. This event marked the first flight of the C-17 by an operational crew. The flight focused on a normal landing, take-offs, VFR patterns, and instrument approach procedures. The crew felt the aircraft was "slightly easier to fly than the WST." Ground training being conducted at Charleston had "adequately prepared them for flight training. Crew members were: Maj Joe Niemeyer, 17 ALS, Maj Paul Sykes, 317 ALS, Capt Tim Bender, 17 ALS, CMSgt Mark Smith, C-17 Integration Office, and MSgt Pat Farley, 17 ALS. Lt Col Jeff Kettrey, HQ AMC, was also on board. 3 May 1993

Although the C-17 continued to suffer from "childhood diseases," with the landing gear providing the most maintenance challenges, they became fewer and did not prevent the jet from doing yeoman service from its first days on line. As soon as the C-17 joined the 17th AS it began flying training sorties and the usual freight missions in CONUS. Even before the squadron was declared fully operational it had flown its first "real-world" emergency airlift missions,

² The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

these to Kuwait during Operation Vigilant Warrior in response to Iraqi saber rattling. Beginning on 14 October 1994 the C-17 contributed two direct flights of 14 to 15 hours duration each. The first C-17 operational mission was flown on an aircraft delivered just a month before which had only 58 hours on its log. The crew picked up five U.S. Army vehicles, containerized cargo, and other supplies at Langley AFB, Virginia, before departing for the Middle East. The following summer, during the August 1995 Operation Intrinsic Action, C-17s again flew to Kuwait with the airlifter's participation in its first large-scale exercise.

Air Mobility Command will stand down two C-17 squadrons over the next two years and move the units' 16 total airplanes into backup status as part of a cost-saving plan laid out in Fiscal 2015 defense legislation,. Officials will inactivate the 17th Airlift Squadron at JB Charleston, S.C., in this fiscal year, followed by the 10th AS at JB Lewis-McChord, Wash., next fiscal year. Each squadron operates eight C-17s. Moving these aircraft from the Air Force's primary aircraft inventory to its backup aircraft inventory is expected to save the service approximately \$110 million per year since BAI assets are not assigned personnel or flying hours. AMC's goal, is to return these C-17s to PAI status at some point and transfer them to the reserve components, said Maj. Gen. Michael Stough, AMC's director of strategic plans, requirements, and programs. "We're working with our Air National Guard partners to do that, perhaps even as early as Fiscal 2016," he said. Back in 1993, the 17th AS became the first operational unit to receive the C-17.

2015