

32 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



MISSION

The 32 ARS is comprised of proud, dedicated professionals providing Global Reach for America through individual excellence and teamwork. It can rapidly mobilize, deploy and operate 16 KC-10 aircraft with aircrew members and support personnel providing air refueling and strategic airlift capabilities to theater, combatant and coalition commanders around the world.

LINEAGE

32 Aero Squadron organized, 13 Jun 1917

Demobilized, 14 Apr 1919

Reconstituted and redesignated 32 Bombardment Squadron, 24 Mar 1923

Activated, 24 Jun 1932

Redesignated 32 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy), 6 Dec 1939

Redesignated 32 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 6 Mar 1944

Redesignated 32 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 5 Aug 1945

Inactivated, 15 Oct 1945

Activated, 4 Aug 1946

Redesignated 32 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 28 May 1948

Discontinued and inactivated, 8 Jun 1964

Redesignated 32 Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy and activated, 23 Dec 1964

Organized, 15 Mar 1965

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1979

Activated, 1 Nov 1981

Redesignated 32 Air Refueling Squadron, 1 Sep 1991

STATIONS

Camp Kelly, TX, 13 Jun–11 Aug 1917

Etampes, France, 20 Sep 1917

Issoudun, France, 28 Sep 1917
Bordeau, France, 6 Jan–18 Mar 1919
Mitchel Field, NY, 5–14 Apr 1919
Rockwell Field, CA, 24 Jun 1932
March Field, CA, 25 Oct 1935
Albuquerque, NM, 4 Jun–22 Nov 1941 (air echelon, which was at Hamilton Field, CA, under orders for movement to Philippine Islands at time of Japanese attack on Hawaii on 7 Dec 1941, apparently moved to Muroc, CA, 8 Dec 1941; ground echelon departed San Francisco aboard ship on 6 Dec 1941 and returned on 9 Dec 1941)
Bakersfield, CA, 17 Dec 1941 (air echelon evidently departed for Southwest Pacific, late Dec 1941; concurrently dissolved and personnel assigned to other units)
Geiger Field, WA, 14 Mar 1942
Alamogordo, NM, 27 May 1942 (operated from Muroc, CA, 28 May–14 Jun 1942)
Richard E. Byrd Field, VA, 21 Jun–19 Jul 1942
Chelveston, England, 18 Aug 1942
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 26 Nov 1942
Maison Blanche, Algeria, 6 Dec 1942
Biskra, Algeria, 16 Dec 1942
Ain M'lila, Algeria, 16 Jan 1943
St-Donat, Algeria, 8 Mar 1943
Oudna, Tunisia, 6 Aug 1943
Cerignola, Italy, 11 Dec 1943
Lucera, Italy, 2 Feb 1944–Jul 1945
Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 28 Jul 1945
Mountain Home AAFld, ID, 17 Aug 1945
Pyote AAFld, TX, 23 Aug–15 Oct 1945
Clovis AAFld, NM, 4 Aug 1946
Smoky Hill AAFld (later, AFB), KS, 16 Jul 1947
Barksdale AFB, LA, 7 Nov 1949
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 15 Apr 1958–8 Jun 1964
Lockbourne (later, Rickenbacker) AFB, OH, 15 Mar 1965–30 Sep 1979
Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Nov 1981
McGuire AFB, NJ, 1 Sep 1994

DEPLOYED STATIONS

RAF Lakenheath, England, 16 May–1 Dec 1950
Brize Norton RAF Station, England, 8 Dec 1952–6 Mar 1953
Sidi Slimane AB, French Morocco, 14 Feb–15 Apr 1954

ASSIGNMENTS

Unknown, 13 Jun–Sep 1917
Third Aviation Instruction Center, Sep 1917–Jan 1919
Unknown, Jan–14 Apr 1919
19th Bombardment Group, 24 Jun 1932

Sierra Bombardment Group, 16 Dec 1941
Fourth Air Force, 17 Jan 1942
Second Air Force, 16 Mar 1942
301 Bombardment Group, 31 Mar 1942–15 Oct 1945
301 Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946
301 Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952–8 Jun 1964
Strategic Air Command, 23 Dec 1964
301 Air Refueling Wing, 15 Mar 1965–30 Sep 1979
2 Bombardment Wing, 1 Nov 1981
2 Operations Group, 1 Sep 1991
458 Operations Group, 1 Jun 1992
305 Operations Group, 1 Jul 1995

ATTACHMENTS

IV Bomber Command, 22 Oct–Dec 1941
7 Bombardment Group for operations, 8–15 Dec 1941
301 Bombardment Group, 16–30 Mar 1942
301 Bombardment Wing, 10 Feb 1951–15 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-26
O-27
B-12
B-3
B-10
B-18
B-17
B-17, 1942
B-29, 1947–1953
B-47, 1953–1961, 1963–1964
RB-47, 1958
E/EB-47, 1961–1964
EC-135, 1965–1966
KC-135, 1965–1972, 1972–1979
KC-10, 1981

COMMANDERS

Unknown, 13 Jun 1917-14 Apr 1919
Cpt Edward C. Block, 31 Dec 1925
Cpt Charles E. Rust, 30 Jun 1926-28 Feb 1927
Inactive, 28 Feb 27-Jun 1929
Unknown, Jun 1929-24 Jun 1932
Cpt Horace N. Heisen, 24 Jun 1932-21 Apr 1933
1LT Donald D. Fitzgerald, 21 Apr 1933

Cpt Charles W. Sullivan, 12 Jul 1933
Cpt Carlyle H. Ridenour, 16 Feb 1934
Cpt Morton H. McKinnon, 1 Jul 1934
Cpt Donald D. FitzGerald, 1 Mar 1935
1LT Wentworth Goss, 16 Mar 1935
Maj Westside T. Larson, Apr 1935
Maj James L. Grisham, 1 Oct 1935
Maj Walter H. Peck, 3 Sep 1936
Maj Eugene L. Eubank, 9 Sep 1938
Cpt Archibald Y. Smith, 17 Jul 39
Cpt Leo W. DeRosier, 15 Jun 1940-10 Oct 1941
Maj John T. Cox, Mar, 1942
Maj Edward F. Stoddard, 24 Oct 1942
Maj Neil E. Walker, 11 May 1943
Maj William J. Emerson, 6 Sep 1943
Cpt Jack W. Collins, 4 Dec 1943
Cpt Wilkie A. Rambo, 12 Dec 1943
Cpt Robert J. Bosworth Jr., 28 Dec 1943
Cpt Edwin F. Harding, 23 Mar 1943-unknown
Cpt Wendell L. Bevan Jr., Dec 1944
Cpt Charles L. Townsend, Jan 1945-unknown
Unknown, 4 Aug 1946-unknown
LTC Max Rogers, unknown-1951
Maj Leonard L. Jella, 11 Mar 1951
LTC Paul Webber, Aug 1951
LTC Richard G. Wilkinson, Sep 1951
LTC Bernard J. Finan Jr., Apr 1952
Maj William L. Charlesworth, 15 Apr 1953
LTC C. L. Lowell, Jul 1953
LTC Donald H. Merten, 16 May 1955
LTC Elmer T. Harshbarger, 26 Jan 1956
LTC Francis S. Holmes Jr., 6 Apr 1956
LTC Edward G. Davis, 15 Nov 1957
Maj Alvin G. Schuering, 15 Apr 1958
Maj John P. Moore, 1 Dec 1958
Maj Albert H. Middleton, 17 Dec 1959
Maj John P. Kincaid, 14 Jan 1961
LTC Allen B. Cotton, 7 Nov 1961
LTC J. D. Shore, 1 Jun 1963-8 Jun 1964
None (not manned), 23 Dec 1964-14 Mar 1965
LTC Maurice G. Steward, 15 Mar 1965
LTC Jerome I. Sanders, 15 May 1965
LTC Myrrel Hilger, 2 Oct 1967
LTC Ordean T. Olsen, 14 Jun 1969

LTC Robert B. Parker, 1 Jul 1971
LTC E. J. O'Brien Jr., 1 Nov 1971-10 Jun 1972
None (not manned), 10 Jun-8 Oct 1972
LTC James W. Herman, 9 Oct 1972
Maj John M. Brooks, 31 May 1974
LTC Fred Schuh Jr., 17 Jul 1974
LTC Lloyd S. Hedden, 2 Aug 1975
LTC David J. Pederson, 1 Apr 1977
LTC Donald B. Lyall, 10 Jul 1978
LTC Michael F. Farren, 14 Sep 1978-28 Aug 1979
None (not manned), 29-30 Sep 1979
LTC William R. Graves, 1 Nov 1981
LTC Jack O. Foley, 15 Jan 1982
LTC Harold P. Fielder, 18 Apr 1983
LTC Samuel N. Hezlep Jr., 29 Apr 1984
LTC Larry J. Leturmy, 17 May 1985
LTC Dayre C. Liss, 3 Jul 1986
LTC Walter R. Dill, 9 Dec 1987
LTC Wesley D. Cole Jr, 4 Dec 1989
Lt Cole Dennis B. Dolle, 5 Sep 1991
LTC Jan Swickard, 19 Mar 1992-unknown
Unknown-22 Jun 1993
LTC Thomas Strickland, 22 Jun 1993
LTC David A. Razo, 24 Jun 1994
LTC Richard M. Zink, 3 May 1996
LTC Mark E. Madison, 8 Jul 1997
LTC Michael S. Stough, 25 Mar 1999
LTC John D. LaLumia, 9 Mar 2001
LTC Steven J. Schlumpberger, 14 Feb 2003
LTC Gordon D. Bridger, 4 May 2004
LTC John Wood, 7 Sep 2004
LTC Robert J. Hock, 14 Jun 2006
LTC Jeanette M. Voigt, 25 Jun 2008
LTC Erik L. Simonsen, 3 Mar 2010

HONORS

Service Streamers

World War I Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Egypt-Libya
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia
Defense of Saudi Arabia
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Tunisia, 6 Apr 1943
Germany, 25 Feb 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jan 1961–31 Dec 1962
1 Oct 1966–1 Apr 1967
1 Jul 1983–30 Jun 1985
1 Jul 1985–30 Jun 1986
1 Jul 1986–30 Jun 1987
1 Jul 1987–30 Jun 1988
1 Jul 1988–30 Jun 1989

EMBLEM



32 Bombardment Squadron, Medium



32 Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy





32 Air Refueling Squadron emblem: Celeste, on an equilateral triangle one point to base Azure a stylized eagle Argent grasping two lightning flashes saltirewise Or surmounted in base by a compass rose as a mullet of eight Gules, all within a diminished bordure of the fourth. (Approved, 27 Sep 1994; replaced emblems approved, 23 Aug 1982, 9 Aug 1966 and 21 Nov 1936. Approved, 9 Aug 1966)

MOTTO

LINKING THE CONTINENTS

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 32 Squadron was originally organized on June 13, 1917, at Kelly Field Texas. It left Kelly Field on August 11, 1917 and arrived at Issoudun, France in September remaining there until March of 1919. It did not see any action during this period as it was assigned to the Third aviation instruction center at Issoudun. It returned to the United States aboard the "USS Arizoman" and debarked on April 4, 1919. The squadron was demobilized at Garden City, Long Island and was inoperative until March 24, 1923 when it was reconstituted on the inactive list of the regular army as the 32nd Bombardment Squadron and was assigned to the 19th Bomb Group at Rockwell Field, Coronado, California. And with other squadrons in the Army Air Corps given amphibian aircraft as standard equipment. Designated Active Associate was the 96th Bombardment Squadron 1923-27. Organized on 31 December 1925 with Organized Reserve personnel as a RAI unit with headquarters in the Third Corps Area. Withdrawn from the Third Corps Area on 28 February 1927 and allotted to the Ninth Corps Area. Withdrawn from the Ninth Corps Area on 1 September 1928 and allotted to the Eighth Corps Area. Organized by June 1929 with Organized Reserve personnel as a RAI unit with headquarters at Kelly Field, TX. Organized Reserve officers assigned to the unit participated in summer training at Kelly Field 1929-31. Activated on 24 June 1932, less Reserve personnel, at Rockwell Field, CA.

19 October 1933 Fokker Y10-27, 31-601, '22', of the 32d Bombardment Squadron, Rockwell Field, California, during ferry flight from Rockwell to Brooks Field, Texas, pilot Capt. Albert F.

Hegenberger, on leg between Tucson, Arizona and Midland, Texas, loses coolant out of starboard engine, engine temperature rises so he shuts it down. Forced down five miles short of Midland Airport, pilot does not get the landing gear completely locked down, collapses on touch down. Aircraft repaired.

Later in 1933 the 32nd was the first squadron to be assigned the Martin B-10 bombers taking them over from General Arnold after he had flown them to Alaska.

When the government began flying the mail, the 32nd had a large part in the program operating them out of Salt Lake City, Utah. During the B-10 era, maneuvers were held all over the country from Florida to the State of Washington and California. Among the squadron commanders in those earlier days were Captains Pyle, Heisen, Ridenour, D. Fitzgerald and Majors Grisham, Peck, Eubank and A. Y. Smith. Some of these men commanded the outfit while it was with the 19th Bomb Group at March Field, California.

From October of 1935 to June of 1941 the 32nd flew operational, navigational, cross-country and practice bombing flights out of March Field. In that month it moved via POC to Albuquerque, New Mexico under the command of Major Tate.

In September of 1941, the 19th received orders to proceed to Clark Field, Manila in the Philippines. The 32nd as the senior squadron was to stay behind for a short period to clean up the administrative details and straighten out the records of all its transfers of personnel to the other squadrons of the group. It was to replace its vacancies with new personnel. Although the 32nd was supposed to rejoin the 19th Bomb Group at Clark Field, the two outfits never again got together because of the events of the coming war.

On December 5, 1941, the ground echelon of the 32nd sailed out of Golden Gate aboard the "USS President Johnson", but the fateful events of the morning of December 7th led to a swift change of orders which landed the 32nd back in San Francisco on the 8th. After a short bivouac in Golden Gate Park the outfit moved to Kern County Airport at Bakersfield, California where the ground and air echelon met for a few days before the air echelon took off late in December for the battle of Java via MacDill field, Brazil, Freetown and Cairo. Meanwhile the ground echelon entrained at Bakersfield on March 10, 1942 and a few days later joined the 301st Bombardment Group at Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington where it was forming. It was at Geiger Field that many of the new personnel got to see the beautiful B-17 Heavy Bomber. After that the old story of moving here and there, pioneering new installations and techniques, distinguishing itself in the air and on the ground went on as ever since 1917.

The other three squadrons that completed the 301st Group were the 352nd, 353rd and the 419th. Major John T. Cox was in command of the 32nd when it left Geiger Field for Alamogordo, New Mexico on May 25th 1942. The air echelon meanwhile flew into Muroc Dry Lake, California on June 5th. The two echelons met at Alamogordo for one day and then separated. 1st Lt. Marvin D. Fleming was appointed acting commander of the Ground echelon and on June 18th left by train for Richmond Army Air Base in Virginia.

The ground echelon arrived in Richmond on June 21st and began its preparation for overseas service with packing and getting all the necessary vaccination shots. While the ground echelon was sweating in the hot Richmond weather the air echelon flew into Hartford, Conn. and then onto Westover Field, Chicopee Falls, Mass. From there it flew cross-country and submarine patrol until July 28th. On July 20th the ground echelon left Richmond for Fort Dix, New Jersey. It remained there for two and a half weeks drawing equipment, taking shots and physicals, getting acquainted with a rifle, hearing briefing lectures and going over the fence to Trenton.

The 32nd left the United States for the third time on August 6, 1942, having formed-up with a convoy in Bedford Basin, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and proceeded to England. While the ground echelon was tossing on the North Atlantic in the "USS Uruguay" and making its way to Chelveston, Northamptonshire, England via disembarkation at Swansea, Wales on August 18th, the air echelon was also heading for Europe. Between the 22nd and 26th of July it moved to Presque Isle, Maine and they were assigned to fly weather for the largest convoy that had ever left the States by that time. The 32nd and the 301st was a part of that convoy. The weather patrol was accomplished in four sections; Presque Isle to Good Bay, Newfoundland; Goose Bay to "BW-1" and "BW-8"; Then to Reyjavi, Iceland and Iceland to Prestwick, Scotland.

In addition, some of the 32nd ships were assigned to patrol the St. Lawrence River and some to convoy duty over the water movement. After the convoy was safely in England without the loss of a ship the planes rejoined the ground echelon at Chelveston on September 19, 1942. This was a merry day for the weary ground personnel who were thoroughly tired by then of shuttling around from location to location. Because of the delayed arrival of the planes the 32nd made its first mission on October 2nd and flying four more before the English weather grounded them.

The first casualty occurred on the mission of November 8th against Lille, France when T/Sgt. Edward C. Grabowski was wounded in the leg by flak. The infamous English late fall weather gave concerned most of the time to do nothing.

Trips to London on three-day passes were arranged and were universally put to good use. The four Jills including Martha Raye, Carole Landis, Kay Francis and Mitzi Mayfair put on a great show for the men. King George V1 visited the field and Corporal Joe Bochenek was credited with having told the King off about the "lousy English weather".

Captain Edward F. Stoddard of the 419th squadron took over command of the 32nd replacing Major Cox who was transferred to the then forming 12th Bomber command on October 24, 1942. The North African invasion was in full swing so the air echelon took off from Chelveston, stopping at Hurn, England and later landing at Tafaraoui Airdrome near Oran, Algeria on November the 24th. They flew their first mission on the 28th of November against the docks at Bizerte. They lost their first ship, "The Bad Penny" piloted by Captain John B. Bruce the squadron operations officer to fighters that were aiming at another ship that had pulled out of formation. The Bad Penny was seen to crash in the sea with all aboard.

From Tafaraoui the air echelon moved to Maison Blanche, outside Algiers on December 6th.. From there they continued operations against targets in Tunisia in company with the rest of the 301st. The Bizerte mission was made alone by six ships of the 32nd. The 32nd air echelon then moved to Biskra, an oasis on the edge of the Sahara Desert on December the 13th. It was here that Rommel's JU-88s, occasionally reinforced with Stukas started their highly concentrated attacks. T/Sgt John Dorosinsky was the only man in the outfit to get wounded during these attacks. He caught shrapnel in his back on two occasions for which he received the purple heart with a cluster.

The advanced ground echelon left Chelveston on November the 26th and boarded the "Duchess of Bedford" and "HMS Toronto" the next day at Liverpool. The ships were to dock at Oran but instead went to Algiers and remained in the harbor for two days and nights. The ships then steamed back to Oran and discharged the remainder of the advanced echelon on December 8th. The rest of the ground echelon started on its way to Africa by train after leaving the station at Higham Ferres on December 8th. The next day they boarded the "Duchess of Richmond". The rest of the convoy left on December the 9th but the "Duchess" was delayed until the 12th because the anchor cable was fouled by a sunken ship in the harbor. The Duchess was forced to run through the out of bounds minefield that was the Saint George channel and sail for three days and nights with only one destroyer as escort in trying to catch up with the rest of the convoy. It was successful and on December the 21st the 32nd unloaded at Mers-el-Kebir, a small port outside of Oran. After a three mile hike up a long hill in the boiling sun with full packs they boarded trucks for their trip to their new home. It was a barren soggy hill later called "mud hill" due to the December and January rains.

The 32nd Bomb Squadron was very active in the North African campaign in 1943. In the photo at left Air Mechanics are replacing the wing of a B-17 that was damaged by flak in a raid over Gabes, Tunisia, in North Africa. The Crew Chief in charge of this repair was T/Sgt. Kenneth A. McIntosh, far right. Planes that were damaged beyond repair were used for spare parts.

After a month's stay the ground echelon entrained at St. Barge on January 21st and arrived several days later at Ain M'Lila, an airfield near Constantine, Algeria. The air echelon arrived the same day so on the 21st there was a joyous reunion for the 32nd squadron. Cold weather set in and a snowstorm put the finishing touches on life in a pup tent. It was here that operations began in earnest as a result of the three echelons having joined forces. The outfit lost a new crew and plane on their first mission. The only veteran aboard was Captain Broderick, the pilot. Missions continued from there for almost six weeks but on March 6, 1943 the 301st moved to a different mud hole about 45 miles the other side of Constantine. This base was located at St. Donat and was fairly permanent so the Group remained there until August 6th of 1943. In conjunction with the 301st while at St. Donat the 32nd distinguished itself because of its part in the Tunisian, Pantellerian, Sicilian and a portion of the Italian campaigns. The entire list of serviceable aircraft was involved in the mission to attack an ammunition ship that was being rushed to Rommel's aid. The ship was sunk and the 301st along with the 32nd squadron earned its first Presidential Citation.

While at this base, on the 10th of April, the 32nd was dispatched with the 301st to attack the Italian heavy cruiser Trieste, which was anchored in a cove at La Maddalena, Sardinia, protected by anti-submarine nets. In a classic attack from 19,000 feet, shown below, direct hits with 1000-pound bombs sank the Italians' last heavy cruiser, leaving only the anti-submarine nets in view.

To reach targets in Italy more easily, the organization moved to Oudna Number 2, an airdrome 16 miles from Tunis on the first anniversary day of their departure from the States. During their stay at Oudna the 15th Air Force was created and the 32nd was transferred on paper from the 12th Air Force to the 15th. The 15th flew its first mission on November 2nd against Wiener Neustadt, Germany and the news bulletins proudly pointed out that only four ships were lost on that initial attack. Those four ships constituted the 32nd's worst loss to date. The 32nd sent six ships on this raid and the remaining two didn't return until the next day after stopping off for emergency repairs and running out of gas on the return trip.

Major Neil E. Walker had assumed command of the 32nd in July of 1943 after Major Stoddard completed his fifty missions. Major William J. "handlebars mustache" Emerson had relieved Major Walker on September the 6th.

On December 2nd, 1943 the squadron began the move to Italy completing the process on December the 9th. Captain Jack W. Collins who had succeeded Major Emerson assumed command of the 32nd. The new station was Guilia Airdrome, Cerignola No 1, Italy. It was at this base that Captain Collins was succeeded as Commanding Officer by Captain Wilkie A. Rambo on December 12. One-week later Captain Rambo was seriously wounded in the leg by flak over Innsbruck, Germany and Captain Collins assumed acting command until December 28th. Captain Robert J. Bosworth took his place to become the squadron's fourth commander within one month. After settling down at Cerignola, the 32nd continued to attack both strategic and tactical targets in Italy, France, Germany and the Balkans until February 3rd, 1944. It moved to Lucera No. 8 just seven miles north of Foggia to make way for a B-24 Group that the base was better suited for. Before the squadron left Cerignola Corporal Dillard was killed by a 500-pound bomb that was accidentally dropped while loading a ship. Flight Officer Parker was disciplined for making a remarkable emergency belly landing, a feat which rivaled in proficiency Captain Casey's one engine landing with two flat tires at St. Donat. It was Flight Officer Parker's fifty missions as a Flight Officer.

After a week at Lucera the field's runway became unserviceable with mud due to the heavy rains and the squadron moved to Foggia Main, the hub airdrome of the satellite system the Germans had built around Foggia. We had attacked this same airdrome several times from bases in North Africa.

On Easter Sunday, April the 9th the group moved back to Lucera and began to improve the field and living area for its long stay. Numerous permanent and semi-permanent buildings were built including an Officer and Enlisted men's clubs. It was reported that the 32nd had the best

permanent facilities in the group. It was here that the "32nd Flying Vagabonds", a 15-piece band of professional caliber was formed. With the aid of such superior musicians as Carl Garner, pianist, Bob Andrews, trumpet, Sam Kolodziej, tenor sax, Bob Cameron, guitar, Elmer LaGassey, trombone, Lucien Taillac, alto sax and Brayton Coleman, drums won the Southern Italy Organizational band contest sponsored by Army Special Service.

On the more serious side, some of the high spots of the Italian stay were the running battle over Regensburg, Germany. February 1, 1944 marked the group's worst loss of sixteen planes out of twenty-two and on this occasion the Organization's second Presidential citation. The conclusion of December in 1944 somewhat paralleled the events of the previous December. Lt. Col. Edwin F. Harding (right), who had assumed command on March 25 of that year completed his missions early in December. On December 23 he was succeeded by Major Donald W. Ewing the former squadron operations Officer. Major Ewing and his crew were lost in action on December 26th and Captain Wendell L. Beven Jr., a west pointer from the 353rd squadron was appointed Commanding Officer of the 32nd. Major Ewing and his crew all returned after a long trip back from behind the Italian lines via Cairo some weeks later. Among his gunners was S/Sgt. Everett C. MacArthur, a converted mechanic and orderly room clerk who was again shot down in April and given up for lost. He was imprisoned in Bologna and released and after a trip through the Brenner pass aboard a 5th army tank he returned to the squadron, the eve of V-E day on May 8th, 1945.

Missions ended with the cessation of hostilities and after that time only a few missions of transporting food and clothing to Northern Italy, Austria and the Balkans. Most personnel were then being relieved of duty in the Italian theater and were transported back to the States. Those remaining packed up their belongings and turned the squadron over to the Quartermaster Corps. They then departed for the University of Naples at Bagnoli. From there they boarded a small banana boat in Naples on July 14th, 1945 and on the 25th docked at Hampton Roads, Virginia.

TAKING PART in this official return of the 301st to the United States was nine men who had originally gone over with the squadron in August of 1942. They had not been home on rotation or temporary duty. They lacked just twelve days of serving overseas for three years. From Camp Patrick Henry the men of the 32nd were sent to their several distribution centers for a thirty-day rest, recuperation and rehabilitation leave carrying orders to report at the completion thereof to the 301st at Sioux Falls. But V-J day fortunately intervened and with only a few exceptions those men never saw Sioux Falls. Most were discharged by early September at their distribution centers and some with as high as 140 discharge points.

In August 1946 the 301st Bomb Group Very Heavy (32d, 352d, and 353d Bomb Squadrons) was activated at Clovis, New Mexico, and assigned to Strategic Air Command. In July 1947 the Unit moved to Smoky Hill AAFB, Kansas, and was assigned to the Fifteenth Air Force. This was strictly a paper change as no personnel were yet involved. The 301st was not fleshed out with people until the fall, with men from its old sister group of World War II, the 97th. On 5 November 1947 SAC assigned the 301st Bombardment Group (Very Heavy) to the 301st Bombardment Wing

(VH), along with the 32d, 352d, and 353d Bombardment Squadrons and support units. Most of the men were World War II veterans, although few of the air and ground crews had had any experience with B-29s.

After becoming operational in January, it was the 301st's turn to deploy overseas in April 1948. After a twenty-four-hour weather delay, on 12 April thirty B-29s departed Smoky Hill and proceeded toward Europe by way of Westover AFB, Massachusetts, and Goose Bay, Labrador. They had planned to rendezvous over Brest, France, and fly in formation over Paris before landing fifteen miles outside of Munich at Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. The 32d returned stateside on 27 April and the 353d followed the next day. The 352d remained for thirty days and began its return to Kansas on 15 May, with its last bomber landing at Smoky Hill on 27 May. During the return, the 352d attempted to fly nonstop from the Azores to Smoky Hill. Three B-29s made it and three others recovered in Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio. A few days earlier the 32d returned to Germany for a month, and on 3 June the 353d also deployed to Germany for a month with seven bombers, landing there on the ninth. On one of these return flights in May, the remains of Father Flanagan, of Boy's Town fame, were flown aboard a 301st B-29 to Omaha, Nebraska.

On 27 June SAC dispatched the 301st's two stateside bomber squadrons (32d and 352d) to Goose Bay, and put the rest of its force on twenty-four hour alert. The crews were told to pack for war, as if they were not returning to Kansas. On 28 June President Truman ordered the two 301st squadrons to Germany, with most of the B-29s arriving there the next day. Training was cancelled and the airmen stood on alert.

The Wing made its first overseas deployment with the refueling squadron in May 1950, scheduled as a three-month TDY to Great Britain. An advance party departed Barksdale on 2 May 1950. The 32d Bomb Squadron, 301st Air Refueling Squadron, and Headquarters went to Lakenheath, while the 352d and 353d Bomb Squadrons went to Sculthorpe. The main body of aircraft arrived in England between 15 and 21 May, flying their first mission on the twenty-second. As usual, the majority flew via the Azores, while at least four bombers took the northern route by way of Iceland. The 301st sent 1,360 officers and enlisted men to Britain, leaving only 359 behind at Barksdale.

In July the Unit was reinforced when its six remaining combat crews and eleven bombers arrived from Barksdale. Because of the shortage of qualified 301st crews, personnel from the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Barksdale assisted in ferrying the B-29s to England. SAC sent two other bomb wings and later a fighter-escort group to Britain, crowding the bases assigned to SAC. Therefore, the 301st moved its entire operation to Lakenheath, which greatly overcrowded that station's billeting, messing, and aircraft facilities. Later in the month, the 301st transferred nineteen bombers and crews to Burtonwood.

This "three-month TDY" to Britain that was scheduled to end in August was extended indefinitely, much to the detriment of morale to both the men in England and their families in Louisiana. Despite trips to the Continent, the marginal living conditions at the two British bases,

as well as the uncertainty of the return date, made for a bad situation. One problem the airmen encountered was clothing as the troops had brought along only summer and lightweight gear for the 90-day stay — along with the TDY extension came cold weather. Finally, an aircraft arrived carrying new blue USAF uniforms.

In late May Captain Tommy DiSalvo (32d), aircraft commander of a Select Crew, with an additional flight engineer and navigator, flew forty-six hours and ten minutes a distance of 9,438 miles. The feat, an effort by the crew to complete their quarterly requirements on one flight, required three air-to-air refuelings and the transfer of over fifteen thousand gallons of gas. This was considered to be a record, at least unofficial, for a B-29.

On 30 November 1956 Major Robert Slane (32d) was involved in a night-formation mission over Canada when eight hours into the mission he encountered problems with his hydraulic flight controls. The primary system failed during a left turn, but then corrected itself. Later the system failed again and Slane began operating on the emergency system. After making a left turn, Slane began to level the wings, but the aircraft kept rolling to the right. Although he disengaged the autopilot, he was unable to stop the bomber's roll. Slane then pulled back power on the left side and advanced power on the right side, which seemed to hold the B-47 steady. Just as he asked the copilot for help, the bomber whipped into a downward spiral. Slane gave the bailout signal and, using all his strength to counteract the severe centrifugal force, ejected thirty-five miles north-east of Port Arthur, Ontario, on the northern shore of Lake Superior. While initial reports indicated all four crewmembers ejected, Slane was the only one able to exit the aircraft." Boeing personnel interviewed Slane in the hospital and quickly deduced what had occurred. A relatively minor change in the hydraulic system, perhaps a \$1.39 part, solved the problem; meanwhile, SAC grounded its entire fleet of eighteen hundred B-47s. Apparently this problem had caused at least five previously unexplained B-47 crashes from which there had been no survivors.

In March 1957 Carroll Zimmerman, Chief of Operations Analysis at Second Air Force, proposed using trailers as alert facilities. He won the ear of the new Second Air Force commander, General John McConnell, who liked the idea, most especially since it was not expensive. As Second Air Force was headquartered at Barksdale, it was only natural the 301st would be tapped to try out the proposal. The 32d Bomb Squadron got the job and Elton Stulting was put in charge. In January 1958, three 50-foot trailers were parked six feet from three B-47s: one trailer housed the aircrews, one the ground crews, and the third served as reading room and mess hall. Check lists were revised in order to accomplish as much beforehand as possible and to simplify and speed up the process of launching the B-47s. In short order the system was implemented, and it soon reached a point where all three bombers could be taxiing in less than five minutes after the sound of the klaxon. Initially the bombers did not take off on drills, but later they did. During the test period, the last 301st alert aircraft averaged 10.5 minutes to make a simulated takeoff in daytime and 16 minutes at night. For the tests the crews were put on alert for a two-day tour. The area between the trailers and aircraft became a high-speed zone once the siren sounded. To ensure the aircrew could move quickly and safely from the trailers to the bombers, a pathway was painted between the two — and nothing and nobody

was permitted in that area. A group of generals, including Generals LeMay and McConnell, were inspecting the 301st alert facility so they could observe crew response, and had been warned not to be inside the painted zone when the siren sounded. One brigadier general failed to heed the warning and was standing about four feet from a trailer door inside the painted area when the siren went off. Bursting out of the trailer doors, one of the 301st's larger aircraft commanders hit the general broadside and knocked him about fifteen feet. Both LeMay and McConnell roared.

On the night of 21 February 1961 Captain William Gillespie (32d) was refueling in marginal weather at fifteen thousand feet. Apparently the bomber got out of the refueling envelope, hit prop wash, and went out of control. Although the pilot thought he could regain control and told the crew to stick with the descending bomber, the navigator, First Lieutenant Herman Crawford bailed out at seven thousand feet. The instructor-navigator also bailed out, but Crawford was the only survivor on the five-man crew.

In 1964 the 301st again changed its mission. By 4 May it transferred thirty EB-47s to the 376th Wing and the rest to the scrap yard at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, and in return received the 91st Refueling Squadron with sixteen KC-135s and twenty-nine crews from the 376th Bomb Wing. In June the three bomb squadrons were deactivated, and the Wing was redesignated the 301st Air Refueling Wing, SAC's first all-jet refueling wing with thirty KC-135s. SAC normally paired B-52 units with a KC-135 refueling squadron; the 301st was the exception with two KC-135 refueling squadrons, the 91st and 321st. In March 1965 the 321st was inactivated and the 32d Air Refueling Squadron was activated.

In the mid-1970s SAC began an adjustment of its tanker fleet, and in 1971 reduced the 301st from thirty to twenty aircraft. The 91st Air Refueling Squadron was inactivated and transferred to McConnell AFB, Kansas; ten of the aircraft went to Grissom AFB, Indiana, and the remaining five to the 32d, the 301st's remaining squadron. Then in October 1973 when SAC increased the aircraft authorization of the 301st from twenty to thirty, the 301st received KG-135s and crews from both McCoy AFB, Florida, and Westover AFB, Massachusetts. To handle the increase, the 301st Wing organized a second squadron and activated the 301st Air Refueling Squadron on 30 September 1973. Two years later the 301st Wing was reduced from thirty aircraft and forty-five crews to twenty-two tankers and twenty-eight crews. Obviously two squadrons were not required to handle this reduced force, so on 31 December 1975 the USAF deactivated the 301st Air Refueling Squadron.

On 3 February 1978 Governor James Rhodes of Ohio announced that he had information from reliable sources that Rickenbacker was closing. This proved correct, although one Air Force study concluded the closing the SAC operation at Rickenbacker would adversely affect the command's survivability. On 26 April 1979 the Secretary of the Air Force officially confirmed the closing. In March the Air Force briefed congressional leaders that the 301st would be inactivated at the end of 1979. The fifteen tankers were sent off to eight other air refueling units, the last KC-135 leaving the base on 18 July. The 32d Air Refueling Squadron, which had already disbanded its crews, ceased operations on 30 July. Besides the base, the aircraft, and

military personnel, a large number of civilians were affected as well by the 301st's disbandment.

On 17 March 1981, the first KC-10A, 79-0434 was delivered to SAC. Delivery actually took place at the Douglas Aircraft Company plant in Long Beach, California. Lieutenant General Edgar 5. Harris, Jr., Commander of Eighth Air Force, accepted the new aircraft and flew it to Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana. It was initially assigned to Detachment 2 of the 4200th Test and Evaluation Squadron for testing and evaluation purposes. On 1 November, this aircraft, along with five additional ones that had been produced by Douglas, were assigned to the 32d Air Refueling Squadron, a newly-activated unit of the 2d Bomb Wing, also located at Barksdale. Nicknamed the "Extender," the KC-10A was substantially larger and capable of carrying more fuel than the KC-185. It was outfitted with both the boom and extended hose refueling system, enabling it to refuel a wide variety of aircraft. Manned with a crew of four; pilot, copilot, flight engineer, and boom operator, the versatile Extender was able to refuel fighter aircraft on overseas flights and carry equipment and personnel to support the fighters at deployment bases.

November 1983 marked the first of a number of conflicts that arose in the 1980s. Two 32nd ARS KC-10s supported Operation Urgent Fury, the invasion of Granada, by refueling C-141s and AC-130s.

USAF UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 2 Mar 2012

Updated: 4 Feb 2019

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. *301 Bombardment Wing, Barksdale AFB, LA. 1950.*