

## 39 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

39 Transport Squadron constituted, 2 Feb 1942  
Activated, 22 Feb 1942  
Redesignated 39 Troop Carrier Squadron, 4 Jul 1942  
Redesignated 39 Troop Carrier Squadron, Heavy, 21 May 1948  
Inactivated, 14 Sep 1949  
Redesignated 39 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 3 Jul 1952  
Activated, 14 Jul 1952  
Redesignated 39 Troop Carrier Squadron, 1 Mar 1966  
Redesignated 39 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 May 1967  
Inactivated, 31 Jul 1971  
Activated, 31 Aug 1971  
Redesignated 39 Airlift Squadron, 1 Jun 1992  
Inactivated, 1 Jun 1992  
Activated, 1 Oct 1993

#### STATIONS

Duncan Field, TX, 22 Feb 1942  
Bowman Field, KY, 9 Oct 1942  
Lawson Field, GA, Oct 1942  
Maxton, NC, 2-12 Dec 1942  
Garbutt, Australia, 22 Jan 1942  
Archerfield, Australia, 22 Feb 1942  
Port Moresby, New Guinea, 28 Sep 1943  
Finschhafen, New Guinea, 23 Apr 1944

Hollandia, New Guinea, Jul 1944  
Leyte, 19 Nov 1944  
Clark Field, Luzon, 28 Mar 1945  
Okinawa, Japan, 19 Aug 1945  
Fukuoka, Japan, 11 Nov 1945  
Tachikawa AB, Japan, 15 Jan 1946  
Yamato, Japan, 17 Jul 1946  
Carelus AAFld, Japan, 6 Sep 1946  
Tachikawa AB, Japan, 16 Oct 1946-21 Sep 1948  
Wiesbaden, Germany, 30 Sep 1948  
Celle RAF Station, Germany, 23 Dec 1948-14 Sep 1949  
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 14 Jul 1952  
Neubiberg AB, Germany, 23 Mar 1953  
Evreux-Fauville AB, France, 24 Jun 1956-20 Jun 1964  
Lockbourne AFB, OH, 20 Jun 1964-31 Jul 1971  
Pope AFB, NC, 31 Aug 1971-1 Jun 1992  
Dyess AFB, TX, 1 Oct 1993

#### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Evreux-Fauville AB, France, Feb-May 1965  
RAF Mildenhall, England, 13 May- 18 Jul 1968  
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 15 Apr-22 Jul 1969  
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 12 Dec 1973-17 Feb 1974, 12 Apr-14 Jun 1976, 1 Oct-15 Dec 1977  
RAF Mildenhall, England, 12 Jul-14 Sep 1975, 4 Jan-Mar 1977, 5 Jun- 14 Aug 1979, 8 Oct-Dec  
1980, 3 Feb-14 Apr 1982, 4 Jun-13 Aug 1983, 1 Oct-12 Dec 1984, 2 Feb-15 Apr 1986, 3  
Mar-15 May 1987, 3 Jun-10 Aug 1988, May-11 Jul 1991, 3 Apr-31 May 1992

#### **ASSIGNMENTS**

317 Transport (later, 317 Troop Carrier) Group, 22 Feb 1942-14 Sep 1949  
317 Troop Carrier Group, 14 Jul 1952  
465 Troop Carrier Wing, 12 Mar 1957  
317 Troop Carrier Wing, 8 Jul 1957  
322 Air Division, 25 Sep 1958  
317 Troop Carrier (later, 317 Tactical Airlift) Wing, 15 Apr 1963-31 Jul 1971  
317 Tactical Airlift Wing, 31 Aug 1971  
317 Tactical Airlift Group, 1 Oct 1978  
317 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1980  
317 Operations Group, 1 Jan-1 Jun 1992  
7 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1993

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

Detachment 1, 322d Air Division, Feb-May 1965  
513 Tactical Airlift Wing, 13 May-18 Jul 1968  
7310 Tactical Airlift Wing, 15 Apr-22 Jul 1969

322 Tactical Airlift Wing, 12 Dec 1973-17 Feb 1974  
513 Tactical Airlift Wing, 9 Jul-15 Sep 1974 and 12 Jul-14 Sep 1975  
435 Tactical Airlift Wing, 12 Apr-14 Jun 1976 and 1 Oct-15 Dec 1977  
435 Tactical Airlift Group, 4 Jan-4 Mar 1977  
313 Tactical Airlift Group, 5 Jun-14 Aug 1979  
313 Tactical Airlift Group, 8 Oct-13 Dec 1980, 3 Feb-14 Apr 1982, 4 Jun-13 Aug 1983, 1 Oct-  
12 Dec 1984, 2 Feb-15 Apr 1986, 3 Mar-15 May 1987, 3 Jun-10 Aug 1988, May-11 Jul 1991  
313 Tactical Airlift Group, 3 Apr-31 May 1992

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-47, 1942-1946  
C-46, 1946-1948  
C-54, 1946-1949  
C-119, 1952-1958  
C-130, 1958-1971  
C-130, 1971-1992

### **COMMANDERS**

Unkn, 22 Feb-23 Jun 1942  
Capt William A. Williams, 24 Jun 1942  
Maj Joseph C. Ford Iii, 26 Jun 1942  
Maj Frank S. Monk Jr., 8 May 1944  
Maj James G. Tuley, 27 Nov 1944  
Capt Donald T. Baker, 3 Jul 1945  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Earl G. Yarbrough, 2 Nov 1945-Unkn  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt Leslie Good, Unkn  
Cpt Fred C. Simpson, Feb 1946  
Maj Elmon R. Cobb, 16 Oct 1946  
Lt Col Hudson M. Schieber, 1 May 1947  
Capt Jack C. Bickford, 29 May 1947  
Maj Joseph F. Nesmith, 20 Jun 1947  
Lt Col James M. Johnson, 14 Jul 1947  
Lt Col Walter E. Chambers, 15 Jun 1948  
Lt Col Robert J. Duval, 11 Mar 1949  
Maj John D. Garlington, Apr 1949  
Maj Wilbert E. St John, Jun 1949-Unkn  
Lt Col Robert H. Murray, 14 Jul 1952  
Lt Col John W. Blalock, 23 Mar 1953  
Maj Walter H. Lamb, 22 Feb 1954  
Maj Floyd K. Shofner, 1 Oct 1954  
Lt Col Elmer Cryer, 8 Jul 1956  
Lt Col Jess R. Nickols, Mar 1958  
Lt Col Harry J. Thompson, 12 Feb 1959  
Lt Col John P. Jones Jr., 4 Jan 1960

Col Eban D. Smith, 5 Jul 1963  
Lt Col Guy E. Ridgeway Jr., 14 Oct 1966  
Col John R. Delmore, 1 Nov 1968  
Lt Col Robert E. Parry, 10 Feb 1969  
Lt Col Robert C. Vrastil, 11 Jan 1970  
Lt Col Leo C. Wurschmidt, 18 Jan-1 Jun 1971  
Lt Col Frederick R. Jacobs, 31 Aug 1971  
Lt Col Derwent Langley Jr., 10 Aug 1972  
Lt Col Robert L. Biggs, 1 Jun 1973  
Lt Col Frank J. Kelley Jr., 28 Jan 1976  
Lt Col Donald L. Koch, 27 Mar 1978  
Lt Col John T. Payne, 1 Apr 1980  
Lt Col Byron R. Hooten, 27 Jul 1981  
Lt Col George A. Gray Iii, 19 Aug 1983  
Lt Col Gerald G. Iverson, 23 Jan 1985  
Lt Col Ross P. Van Lerberghe, 30 Jun 1986  
Lt Col Jack P. Holbein Jr., 5 May 1988  
Lt Col Jon M. Swanson, 29 Dec 1989  
Lt Col Randy E. Honnet, 15 Jul 1991-1 Jun 1992  
Lt Col Thomas L. Bowdin, 1 Oct 1993  
Lt Col Byron Mills, 25 May 1995  
Lt Col James P. Sturch, 7 Feb 1997  
Lt Col Robert L. Reneau, 18 Jun 1998  
Lt Col Derek P. Dickey, 12 Jul 1999  
Lt Col Jeff Newell, By Dec 2001  
Lt Col Charles K. Hyde, By Dec 2002  
Lt Col Patrick Mordente, 9 Jan 2004  
Lt Col Lee Flint, Jan 2005  
Lt Col Andrew McIntyre, Jun 2007

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Air Offensive, Japan  
Papua  
New Guinea  
Northern Solomons  
Bismarck Archipelago  
Western Pacific  
Leyte  
Luzon

Southern Philippines

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Panama, 1989-1990

**Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Papua, [Jan 1943]

New Guinea, 30 Jan-1 Feb 1943

Philippine Islands, 16-17 Feb 1945

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

8 Jul-10 Aug 1960

1 Sep 1962-15 Apr 1963

1 Apr 1964-30 Jun 1965

1 May 1972-30 Apr 1973

1 May 1973-30 Apr 1975

1 May 1975- 30 Apr 1977

1 Jun 1979-31 May 1981

1 Jun 1982-31 May 1984

1 Mar 1987-31 Mar 1988

6 Oct 1989-13 Jan 1990

1 Jun 1996-31 May 1998

1 Jun 1998-30 Jun 1999

1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2000

1 Jul 2000-30 Jun 2001

1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2002

1 Jul 2002-30 Jun 2003

1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004

1 Jul 2004-30 Jun 2005

1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2006

1 Jul 2006-30 Jun 2007

1 Jul 2007-30 Jun 2008

Meritorious Unit Award

1 Jul 2011-30 Jun 2012

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (WWII)

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
10 Mar-28 Nov 1972

**EMBLEM**





A disc, upper segment Ultramarine Blue, lower segment Jasmine Yellow, separated by a White cloud formation, on which is placed a winged Lemon Yellow covered wagon Jasmine Yellow. (Approved, 27 Oct 1942)

On a disc Azure and Or, a covered winged wagon of the second detailed Tenné on a cloud formation in demi-base Argent, all within a narrow border Black. Attached above the disc, a Red scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "TRAILBLAZERS" in Black letters. Attached below the disc, a Red scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "39 AIRLIFT SQ" in Black letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The covered wagon harkens back to the pioneer days when prairie schooners blazed new trails across the Great Plains,

promising a better life for all who dared to make the journey. Today's trailblazers carry on this proud tradition with a winged wagon flying through the clouds, bringing hope to the unit's allies around the globe. (Approved, 1994)

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

TRAILBLAZERS

### **OPERATIONS**

Paratroop drops on Noemfoor, Tagaytay (Luzon), as well as aerial transportation in South, Southwest, and Western Pacific in World War II.

Berlin Airlift, 1948.

Mission of this much travelled 39 Troop Carrier Squadron is to maintain a state of training and proficiency that will insure combat effectiveness in the support of U.S. and N.A.T.O. forces in Logistical Airlift Operations. Other facets of their mission are Aeromedical Evacuation Airlifts, Airborne Operations, and Special Airlift Operations. Currently operating under the command of Lt. Col. Elmer J. Cryer, the 39 Troop Carrier Squadron have many scheduled and unscheduled Air Logistical Support Missions to their credit, flying to England, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey and North Africa.

In addition, the 39 has participated in numerous airborne operations with British, French and American personnel and equipment, and has earned praise from all quarters.

Some idea of the impressive number of special missions flown by the squadron can be gained from their relief-mission activities to the Netherlands and as far away as India during the floods of 1953 and 1955,

The Greek earthquakes of 1953 saw the squadron again help to aid a stricken area, and during the severe winter of early 1956, the squadron was again in the forefront flying special missions to storm stricken, isolated areas of Italy.

Airlift missions to Grenada, in Oct 1983; to Panama, Dec 1989-17 Jan 1990; and to Southwest Asia, Aug 1990-Mar 1991.

A misplaced night vision goggle case led to the C-130J crash that killed 14 at Jalalabad Airport, Afghanistan, in October, Air Mobility Command investigators found. After landing at Jalalabad, the crew conducted engine-running on-load/offload operations. To assist with offloading, the Super Hercules' pilot placed the hard-shell case in front of the yoke to hold the horizontal stabilizer elevators in a raised position, but did not remove it before the nighttime takeoff. The aircraft entered an excessive upward pitch just after takeoff, and the copilot misidentified a trim malfunction as the cause, resulting in improper recovery techniques. The aircraft crashed just off the runway 28 seconds after liftoff and struck a perimeter guard tower, killing all



personnel aboard and three Afghan Special Reaction Force (ASRF) members on the ground. The crew consisted of the pilot, copilot, and two loadmasters assigned to the 39 Airlift Squadron at Dyess AFB, Texas. Two fly-away security team members assigned to the 66th Security Forces Squadron at Hanscom AFB, Mass., and five civilian contractor passengers were also onboard.  
2016

Members of the 317th Airlift Wing at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, trained in airspace over Nevada and California, August 8–16. This training was designed to prepare 39 Airlift Squadron aircrew for future deployed operations in mountainous terrains. Pilots experience higher atmospheric pressure at high altitudes which change the way landings feel, said Capt. Matthew Rounds, 39 AS C-130J Super Hercules pilot. Newer pilots were able to train on operating in these conditions for the first time. “We operated out of Reno-Tahoe International Airport, which has similar elevations to areas we operate overseas,” Rounds said.

Aircrews worked on various airlift procedures such as the combat offload. The combat offload is a method used by C-130 aircrew to deliver cargo in hazardous environments. It involves a fast landing and is followed by an abrupt takeoff that allows for cargo to roll out of the back of the aircraft to support missions on the ground. “One of the biggest wins of this training was building rapport within the units involved in our deployments,” Rounds said. “Our loadmasters were in sync with pilots and our maintainers kept our aircraft good to go. Deployers were able to work side-by-side with the same people they’ll work with overseas.”

The 39 AS also built relationships with Marines assigned to Camp Pendleton, California. “We had the pleasure of working with over 200 Marines, for high-altitude, low-opening (HALO) and static-line parachute drops,” Rounds said. The HALO drops consisted of five to 10 Marines jumping out of the rear of the C-130J at altitudes higher than 3,500 feet. Static-line drops were conducted at 1,250 feet. For each static-line pass, approximately 20 Marines jumped one-by-one with parachutes deploying immediately upon their departure. Marines were able to make multiple jumps during the week and became up-to-date on their requirements for deployment readiness, said Staff Sgt. Carlos Camacho, 1st Transportation Support Battalion jump master.  
2019

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#### 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. *317<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing*. @1955.