

4105 AAF BASE UNIT

MISSION

LINEAGE

4105 AAF Base Unit

STATIONS

Davis Monthan Field, AZ

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Davis-Monthan became officially involved with aircraft storage on 15 November 1945 with the activation of the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) which was assigned responsibility for operation of the field and extended storage of Army Air Force aircraft. The new unit came under the jurisdiction of the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC). Soon afterwards, the SAATSC was placed under the control of the San Antonio Air Materiel Area (SAAMA). On 21 October 1946, the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was redesignated as the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage) with a mission devoted entirely to storage operations.

Initially, the unit's function included the processing of B-29s and C-47s into storage, and the subsequent maintenance and preparation of aircraft for one-time flight to depots for overhaul and return to service. Approximately 650 B-29s and 245 C-47s were in the storage outfit's active inventory early in 1946. An additional 18 "museum-types" were also being maintained during that same period. By the end of the year, there were 679 B-29s and 241 C-47s in the inventory and the number of museum types had grown to 30. Throughout 1946, the unit's personnel had also prepared 82 B-29s and 71 C-47s for flights to depots for overhaul.

When an aircraft first arrived for preservation and storage, all guns, explosive charges, classified material, and any pilferable items were immediately removed. The fuel was drained from the fuel lines which were then pumped full of lightweight oil and drained again; thus leaving a film of oil to preserve the fuel system. The aircraft hydraulics and tires were serviced to normal standards.

The bottom half of the aircraft was not sealed so that circulating air could assist in the prevention of condensation. Engine intakes and exhausts were covered with paper and any gaps or cracks in the upper half of the aircraft skin were tightly taped. Those areas, plus easily damaged surfaces such as fiberglass radomes, fabric control surfaces, and canopies, were then covered with a vinyl plastic compound called "Spraylat." The white Spraylat, applied by spray gun, kept the water and dust out and prevented the occasional desert sand storm from sandblasting the windows and canopies. The main purpose of Spraylat, however, was temperature control.

Without Spraylat, the inside temperature of an unprotected aircraft often reached 200 degrees in the hot Arizona sun. With Spraylat, the inside temperature was only about five degrees hotter than the surrounding air; thus preventing damage to rubber parts and functional components.

Parts reclamation was also a major part of the unit's operation. While some aircraft were scheduled for temporary storage, others were regularly sold to eligible foreign countries, tax-supported organizations, state governments, and police departments. The remaining planes were stripped of parts which were subsequently returned to the supply system. Bare shells that were left were chopped into chunks and sent to a furnace to melt the aluminum which was poured into ingots. The remaining metals were also reclaimed or sold as scrap.

Over the years since the storage operation was first activated, there were several changes in designations and command jurisdiction. Initially, the storage operations were handled by the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base), but on 21 October 1946 the name was changed to the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage). The designation was later changed to the 3040th Aircraft Storage Depot on 20 August 1948 and reclamation/salvage operations were added to the basic mission. The depot nomenclature was later dropped on 5 October 1949 and the unit was rechristened as the 3040th Aircraft Storage Squadron. Then on 1 June 1951, the 3040th was transferred from under the control of the San Antonio Air Materiel Area to the San Bernardino Air Materiel Area (SBAMA).

Davis-Monthan Field, no longer charged with the responsibilities of B-29 training and personnel processing, passed from the jurisdiction of Second Air Force to the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC) on 15 November 1945. Subsequently, the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was activated and assigned the mission of extended aircraft storage for Army Air Force planes. It was additionally given the responsibility for maintenance of the base's lifeless flight line and its profusion of deserted buildings. For a brief period, aircraft storage was the only activity taking place at the once bustling airfield.

Modern Davis-Monthan history began on 31 March 1946 when the newly formed Strategic Air Command (SAC) assumed jurisdiction. The next day, the 248th Army Air Force Base Unit took over host unit responsibilities as a part of Fifteenth Air Force. The 4105th AAF Base Unit continued to conduct operations under the command of SAATSC as an aircraft storage detachment in accordance with a prior transfer agreement. At the time of the transfer, the field had a total population of 279 officers and enlisted personnel.

The 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) and the 4270th AAF Base Unit--(Separation Base) were organized at Davis-Monthan Field. 15 Nov 1945

The 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was redesignated as the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Aircraft Storage). 21 Oct 1946

The designation of the 4105th Base Unit (Aircraft Storage) was changed to the 3040th Aircraft Storage Depot. Reclamation and salvage operations were added to the storage mission. 20 Aug 1948

Davis-Monthan Field, no longer charged with the responsibilities of B-29 training and personnel processing, passed from the jurisdiction of Second Air Force to the San Antonio Air Technical Service Command (SAATSC) on 15 November 1945. Subsequently, the 4105th AAF Base Unit (Air Base) was activated and assigned the mission of extended aircraft storage for Army Air Force planes. It was additionally given the responsibility for maintenance of the base's lifeless flight line and its profusion of deserted buildings. For a brief period, aircraft storage was the only activity taking place at the once bustling airfield.

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Sources
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