

7 MATERIEL SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

Materiel Squadron, 4 Air Base Group
7 Materiel Squadron

STATIONS

March Field, CA
Albuquerque, NM
Philippines

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Before the war, the 7 was with the 19th Bomb Group, in Clark Field, in Angeles City, Pampanga. A materials squadron is just like the Quartermasters for the Air Corp. They provide supplies and do maintenance on the planes.

One reason why squadron members hated MacArthur so much was, the same day Pearl Harbor was bombed, Gen. Brereton, the Air Corp commander in the Philippines got all his planes ready to take off to bomb the Jap airbases in Formosa. He called MacArthur to ask for his permission to do so, Mac replied to him by telling him no, leave your planes on the ground. An hour later, Brereton called MacArthur again, and asked to move his planes to Mindanao, where they would be out of reach from the Jap bombers. Mac again told him no. These planes already had their engines running and the flight crews were already on board. After the 2nd no, from Mac, the pilots and plane crew were told to turn the engines off and go to lunch.

While the pilots and crewmembers were on lunch, the Japanese arrived with bombers and fighter planes. The B-17s were lined up in straight rows on the tarmac at Clark Field. All but 6 of their planes were destroyed. Everyone hears about Pearl Harbor, but the Philippine Bombing was far worse and happened on six hours later. It is listed as happening on December 8, because the Philippines is on the other side of the date-line. Clark was not the only large airstrip in the Philippines, there were many others and they suffered a similar fate.

Now, the planes were gone, but there were still the pilots, crewmen, and ground crews at Clark Field. MacArthur wanted to save the pilots and navigators. MacArthur ordered almost all of the 19th Bomb group and the 6 remaining planes to Mindanao. Those who did not fly to Mindanao were put on a ship and sent there. The 7th Mats and about 200 members of the 19th Bomb group were left behind. They were issued WW I Springfield Rifles, hand grenades, and they took some machine guns from the damaged B-17s which laid on the Tarmac in Clark. They were ordered to go to Bataan, with absolutely no training. Many did not even know how to load their rifles.

The pilots who went to Mindanao were eventually sent to Australia, as planned. The 7th Mats and the few remaining men of the 19th Bomb went to Bataan.

They arrived on Bataan around Jan 2, 1942. They were ordered to go to Bataan Field and Cabcaben Field. The few remaining men of the 19th Bomb were left in Cabcaben Field where they were used for communications. The men from the 7th Mats were combined with the men from the 27th Bomb Group, who also had no planes, and they were named the 2nd Provisional Infantry Regiment.

Bataan is shaped like Florida. MacArthur divided up Bataan lengthwise into two parts: I Corp and II Corp. The 2nd Prov. INF Regt. became a part of II Corp. They were on the east side of Bataan, on the Manila Bay side. I Corp was on the West side of Bataan, on the South China Sea side.

On January 7th, after the Battle of Layac Junction and all the men were already on Bataan, the Filipino and Americans formed their first defensive line on Bataan: the Mauban/Mabatang Line. This line ran through Mauban on the coast of Manila Bay (east side) to Mabatang on the coast of the South China Sea. Right in the middle was Mt. Natib. II Corp had everything east of Mt. Natib and I Corp had everything west of it.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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

7th Material Squadron & 2nd Provincial Infantry on Bataan. Fred Baldassarre.