

## 62 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

62 Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 27 Nov 1942  
Activated, 5 Dec 1942  
Inactivated, 27 Aug 1946  
Redesignated 62 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 20 Sep 1949  
Activated, 17 Oct 1949  
Redesignated 62 Troop Carrier Squadron, 1 Mar 1966  
Redesignated 62 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 May 1967  
Redesignated 62 Airlift Squadron, 1 Dec 1991

#### STATIONS

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 5 Dec 1942  
Del Valle, TX, 12 Dec 1942  
Pope Field, NC, 12 Jan 1943  
Lawson Field, GA, 25 Feb-3 May 1943  
Berguent, French Morocco, 29 May 1943  
Kairouan, Tunisia, 24 Jun 1943  
Castelvetro, Sicily, 3 Sep 1943-15 Feb 1944  
Saltby, England, 24 Feb 1944  
Poix, France, Mar 1945  
Villacoublay, France, 15 Oct 1945-15 Feb 1946  
Bolling Field, DC, 15 Feb 1946  
Greenville AAB, SC, Aug-27 Aug 1946

Smyrna AFB, TN, 17 Oct 1949-27 Aug 1950  
Ashiya, Japan, 4 Sep 1950-15 Nov 1954  
Sewart AFB, TN, 15 Nov 1954  
Little Rock AFB, AR, 9 Mar 1970

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Evreux AB, France, 6 Jun-Aug 1961  
Clark AB, Philippines, 19 May-29 Jul 1962, 5 Aug-Oct 1964, and Mar-May 1965  
RAF Mildenhall, England, 15 Dec 1967-28 Mar 1968, 1 Jul-2 Oct 1968, and 16 Nov 1969-11 Jan 1970  
RAF Mildenhall, England, 3 Jul-30 Aug 1970  
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 2 Apr-31 May 1971

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

315 Troop Carrier Group (attached to 89 Troop Carrier Group), 5 Dec 1942  
314 Troop Carrier Group, 15 Mar 1943  
Third Air Force, Aug- 27 Aug 1946  
314 Troop Carrier Group, 17 Oct 1949  
314 Troop Carrier Wing, 8 Oct 1957  
839 Air Division, 1 Dec 1965  
64 Troop Carrier (later, 64th Tactical Airlift) Wing, 1 Jul 1966  
314 Tactical Airlift Wing, 31 May 1971  
34 Tactical Airlift Training Group, 1 Nov 1978  
314 Operations Group, 1 Dec 1991-.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

322 Air Division, 6 Jun-Aug 1961  
Det 3, 315 Air Division, 19 May-29 Jul 1962 and 5 Aug-Oct 1964  
315 Air Division, Mar-May 1965  
Troop Carrier Wing Provisional, 4413, 1 Dec 1965-30 Jun 1966  
513 Tactical Airlift Wing, 15 Dec 1967-8 Apr 1968, 29 Jun-2 Oct 1968, 16 Nov 1969-11 Jan 1970,  
and 3 Jul-30 Aug 1970  
322 Tactical Airlift Wing, 10 Apr-12 Jun 1971

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-47, 1943-1946  
C-82, 1949-1950  
C-119, 1950-1957  
C-130, 1956

### **COMMANDERS**

Capt J. L. Parker, 12 Dec 1942  
Maj Harvey A. Berger, 14 Jan 1943  
Capt John M. Gibson, 7 Mar 1943

Capt Arthur E. Tappan, 26 Mar 1943  
Maj Oral W. Lee, 25 Sep 1944  
Capt Sidney Weitzman, 24 Aug 1945  
Capt Jack E. Downhill, 24 Sep 1945-unkn  
Maj Harold L. Sommers, 17 Oct 1949  
Lt Col Royal S. Thompson, 25 May 1950  
Maj Louis P. Lindsay, by Nov 1951  
Unkn, 1952-1957  
Maj Joseph Manship, Dec 1957  
Lt Col H. A. Schmoldt, 15 Jun 1958  
Lt Col Perry H. Penn, 21 Jan 1960  
Lt Col Joseph H. Griffith Jr., 25 Jan 1961  
Lt Col Robert J. Marks, 20 Oct 1961  
Lt Col Marvin E. Fouche, 1 Mar 1965  
Lt Col James L. Muller, 13 Jun 1966  
Lt Col Donald N. Armstrong, 7 May 1968  
Lt Col Eugene Frye, 1 Mar 1969  
Lt Col Carl E. Stone, 18 Feb 1970  
Lt Col Donald R. March, 1 Aug 1971  
Lt Col Edward M. Holley, 28 Nov 1972  
Lt Col Robert B. Christensen, 29 Nov 1974  
Lt Col James M. Padgett, 17 May 1976  
Lt Col Bernard J. Clark, 28 Feb 1978  
Lt Col Frances X. McCabe, 27 Nov 1978  
Lt Col Leonard A. Butler, 8 Oct 1980  
Lt Col Thomas E. Lafferty, 24 Jul 1981  
Lt Col Richard E. Frank, 1 Jun 1982  
Lt Col Frank M. Herndon, 16 Jan 1984  
Lt Col William R. Caldwell, 12 Feb 1986  
Lt Col Robert H. Baskett, 16 Oct 1987  
Lt Col Paul J. Fletcher, 1 Jun 1989  
Lt Col Ronald J. Scott Jr., 1 Jul 1991  
Lt Col Richard P. Braid, 15 Jan 1993  
Lt Col Michael A. Underwood, 26 May 1994  
Lt Col Alexander Arnista, 21 Nov 1995  
Lt Col Mark O. Schissler, 22 Apr 1997  
Lt Col Jon A. Matz, 2 Jul 1998  
Lt Col Damon K. Booth, 1 Aug 2000  
Lt Col Mark Ellis, 10 May 2002  
Lt Col Donald F. Kimminau, 6 Jun 2003  
Lt Col Scott E. Decker, 8 Jul 2005  
Lt Col Aaron D. Maynard, 25 May 2007  
Lt Col Charles E. Brown Jr., 21 May 2009

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Sicily

Naples-Foggia

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Central Europe

Korea

UN Defensive

UN Offensive

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

UN Summer-Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korea Summer-Fall, 1952

Third Korean Winter

Korea, Summer 1953

Vietnam

Vietnam Defensive

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Sicily, 11 Jul 1943

France, [6-7] Jun 1944

Korea, 28 Nov-10 Dec 1950

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

6 May 1953- 10 Sep 1954

11 Jan-14 Feb 1955

1 Jan 1960-31 Dec 1961

1 Sep 1962- 15 Apr 1963

1 Dec 1965-30 Jun 1967

1 Jun 1969-31 May 1971

1 Jan 1975- 30 Jun 1976

1 Jun 1985-31 May 1986  
1 Jul 1991-30 Jun 1993  
1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995  
1 Jul 1995-31 Mar 1997  
1 Jul 1997-30 Jun 1999  
1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2001  
1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2003  
1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004  
1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2006  
1 Jul 2006-30 Jun 2007  
1 Jul 2008-30 Jun 2009

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation  
1 Jul 1951-27 Jul 1953

### EMBLEM





62 Troop Carrier Squadron



Azure a trefoil Sable fimbriated Argent charged with a ship Gules sails set White; all within a diminished bordure of the first. (Approved, 26 Oct 1993 and modified, 9 Dec 1994; replaced emblem approved, 24 Apr 1953)

Since World War II, the 62 Airlift Squadron has proudly borne the nickname and patches of the "Yacht Club." The Yacht Club nickname comes from early attempts at OPSEC during WWII, when each unit had a code name. The code names were used so that tasking might be given over unsecured telephone lines. The 62 TCS was at one time assigned "Yacht Club" as their code name. But that's only part of the story! At a group level meeting, a fellow squadron commander chastised Major Tappan, the then 62 TCS commander, with the comment, "You're running your squadron like a country club. Better still, a Yacht Club!" As news of this conversation made its way around, these words became a source of pride among the troops, and the name stuck. A glider pilot, Armand Prosperi designed the original squadron logo during that era. It featured a sailboat superimposed on the center of a playing card symbol, the black club. The squadron motto, "Primus in Toto" (First in Everything) was scribed below the hull of the boat.



On a blue disc with a white inner border a stylized blue and white aircraft represented as a “Blue Baron” (wearing a black silk top hat, white gloves, monocle, cigarette holder in his mouth 2nd carrying a cane).



## **MOTTO**

Blue Barons

## **OPERATIONS**

The history of the 62 Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS) began on December 5, 1942, when the unit was activated at Sedalia Army Air Base, Knob Noster, Missouri. The 62 TCS later joined with the 50th TCS and the 61st TCS to form the 314 Troop Carrier Group (TCG) at Lawson Field, Georgia. A short five months later, on May 12, 1943, equipped with a full complement of shiny, new C-47s; the 62 TCS departed for North Africa to begin combat operations in World War II. Their journey would take more than 61 hours, and they would find North Africa to be either very hot and dry, or flooded by infrequent, but torrential rains which would pound their humble camp.

The unit's first taste of combat operations came when their first mission was flown from Kairouan, Tunisia, to an area near Gela, Sicily, where paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division dropped from the sky to support land operations south of Italy. That day, the worst threat was the U.S. Navy, who shot down 25% of the returning C-47s in the confusion of battle. All crewmembers were recovered, wet and disgusted, but safe. Once Sicily was secured, the thrust of allied operations moved to mainland Italy. The 62 TCS dropped the 82d Airborne again, this time into Salerno Valley. Once Mussolini capitulated in 1943, the 62d moved their operation North, into Castelvetro, Italy and provided theater airlift support.

In early 1944, after serving with distinction in the Mediterranean Theater of operations, the 62 moved with the 314 Troop Carrier Group to Saltby, Lincolnshire, England, where unit members began intensive training in preparation for D-Day. The 62d TCS was part of the initial airborne assault that spearheaded the June 6, 1944 invasion of Normandy -- the largest invasion force ever assembled in modern warfare. More than 882 airlift aircraft flew on D-Day, dropping troops amid intense enemy gunfire and low visibility. In all, almost 2200 men were dropped that first morning on the Cherbourg peninsula of France. The accomplishments of the 314 TCG and the 62 during the Normandy Invasion are best described by a quote from the Presidential Unit Citation received for the period of June 5-7, 1944: "... accomplished 106 sorties, thereby, distinguishing themselves through extraordinary heroism, determination, and esprit de corps, in a flawlessly coordinated group effort in which troop carrier airplanes spearheaded the allied invasion of the European continent."

For the remainder of the war the 62 continued to serve heroically in support of vital air and land campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge, the liberation of Holland, and the supply of liberated Paris. During Operation MARKET GARDEN, the 62 AS dropped British troops near Arnhem, Holland, in an effort to liberate Holland and end the war in Europe. Those brave paratroopers descended into a holocaust: one of the most heroic, but bloodiest battles of the British Army. In February 1945, the squadron relocated yet again; this time to Poix, France, and valiantly flew in Operation VARSITY. This was the first combat mission in which the squadron towed CG-4A gliders. During this invasion of Wesel, Germany over 885 successful glider sorties were flown, placing over 4800 paratroopers on the ground and delivering over 2000 tons of equipment into Germany. The 62 TCS flew 20 C-47s, towing Waco gliders constructed of wood



and steel tubing covered with fabric. Following V-E Day, the 62 TCS transported liberated American, French, and British POWs. The squadron was ordered home to the U.S. in February 1946. As World War II came to a close, the 50th, 61st and 62 squadrons were deactivated and the 314 Troop Carrier Group relocated to Bolling Field, Washington, D.C.

In July 1948, the 314 transferred to Smyrna AFB, Tennessee, and reorganized as the 314 Troop Carrier Wing in September 1949. On September 20, 1949, the 62 was re-designated and, one month later, activated as the 62 Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium). That same month, the C-47 Skytrain was replaced by the new airlift mainstay, the C-119 Flying Boxcar.

In August 1950, the 62 went out on the road for what was intended to be a 60-day temporary duty assignment to Japan. It was to become a four-year stay in sunny, scenic Ashiya, Japan. The unit was originally tasked to join United Nations forces in the Korean conflict as a rotational unit. However, as the fighting on the Korean peninsula escalated, the commitment of the 62 TCS to theater operations expanded and the squadron remained in Japan for approximately 4 years. During the Korean Conflict, while assigned in Ashiya, the 62d temporarily became known as the "Blue Barons." The blue portion of their emblem derived from their squadron color. "Baron" was chosen because history designates a baron as one of high position and honor, and a leader in the line of peers. The 62, having earned nearly every major honor and award for participating in the Korean War, returned from Ashiya, Japan to Sewart AFB, Tennessee, with a distinctive title that captured the true spirit of the squadron.

The 62 was re-equipped with the C-130A May 19, 1957. Four years later, in September 1961, the C-130B arrived, and the squadron became combat-ready in the new aircraft in fewer than 90 days. Less than 1 year later, the Blue Barons tested their combat-ready status once again when they deployed to Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines to support the United States' response to the Laotian crisis.

In December 1964, in order to bring all unit personnel up to combat-ready status, the 62 TCS formed an aircrew training flight. The program was so successful that it was quickly expanded to train all aircrew personnel in the wing. The concept of concentrated, focused training and continuity paved the way for the development of the first Replacement Training Unit (RTU) to train C-130 aircrew members worldwide.

The ensuing years until the present time has held constant activity and change for the 62. The squadron was re-equipped once again, as the newest Hercules in the inventory, the C-130E, arrived in February 1965, just a few short months before the 62 made its first combat airdrops in support of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam conflict. In May 1965, the Blue Barons took part in the largest peacetime airborne operation ever held in Europe -- Operation SOUTHERN ARROW. The following year, the unit supported Operation RAPID STRIKE, a test and evaluation project which refined old procedures and helped pave the way for the new developments in C-130 operations and training.

In May 1967, the 62 was redesignated as the 62 Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS). Two years later,

in March 1970, the unit transferred from Sewart AFB, Tennessee, to Little Rock AFB, Arkansas.

In the early months of 1971 the 61st and 62 Tactical Air Squadrons of the 64th Tactical Airlift Wing were rotated to Rhein-Main in Germany and RAF Mildenhall, England. These missions would prove to be among the last conducted by the 64th Tactical Airlift Wing while stationed at Little Rock Air Force Base.

In June 1971, Headquarters Tactical Air Command issued orders designating the 62 as the formal C-130 aircrew Replacement Training Unit.

November 12 a C-130E accident at Little Rock Air Force Base. A 62 TAS aircraft crashed at 7:11 a.m. after traversing some 8,000 feet of the 12,000 foot main strip. The aircraft lifted to about 200 feet before stalling and plummeting to the left of the runway. Laden with 40,000 pounds of fuel and eleven crewmen, the aircraft burst into flames on impact. Ten of the airmen were killed at the scene. The eleventh later died of his wounds.

The 314's 62 TAS lost seven of their comrades and a C-130E in a fiery crash east of Lake Conway on September 9. Flying in the third position of a three plane formation, a C-130 commanded by Captain Edwin Hayashi was practicing night instrument-guided landings in the third position of the formation. After the moon set, fog left the horizon indistinguishable from the sky. Coming in low, about two miles north of Highway 89 (one and a half miles southeast of Saltillo), Hayashi's C-130E crashed into heavy woods where it burst into flames. All eight crew members were killed.

Seven Little Rock Air Force Base C-130's were operated out of Dyess AFB in Texas. During a training exercise near their temporary base, one of the C-130's belonging to the 62 TAS's crashed at the edge of Rapido Drop Zone, five miles south of Gatesville, Texas. Six of eight crewmen were killed. The survivors, Captain Michael L. Rogers and Tech Sergeant David A. Grimm, were flown to Darnell Field Hospital at Fort Hood, Texas, for treatment.

Between August 1990 and August 1991, as Iraq and Saddam Hussein attacked Kuwait, the 62 was tasked to provide aircrew support for Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM in the Persian Gulf. The unit responded in the true tradition of the Blue Barons, in spite of the continued requirement for aircrew training, flying missions in support of the United Nations effort to defend the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait from Iraqi aggression. Crews staged out of such areas as Rhein-Main and Ramstein Air Bases in Germany, Zaragoza and Torrejon Air Bases in Spain, and Riyadh, Dhahran, Jeddah, and King Fahd in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The countries of Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain were also used. Following Operation DESERT STORM, the squadron deployed personnel and equipment for Operation PROVIDE COMFORT, providing much needed humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq and southeastern Turkey.

On December 1, 1991, the 62 TAS was redesignated as the 62 Airlift Squadron (AS), the designation the squadron uses to this day, and operations and maintenance activities were

merged into one fully functional, cohesive team. In September 1993, the 62 AS was realigned, along with the rest of the 314 Wing, under Air Combat Command. Since the Persian Gulf War, the unit has actively participated in a myriad of real-world contingencies, including Operation RESTORE HOPE in Somalia. In September 1994, the 62 Airlift Squadron reconstituted for the first time since World War II. Members of the unit answered the call to duty and deployed to various locations in support of Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY, the planned invasion to restore democracy in Haiti. On October 1, 1994, the squadron received four extra C-130 aircraft and additional personnel as the 34th Combat Airlift Training Squadron became the United States Air Force Combat Aerial Delivery School, shifting the scope of responsibility for tactical airlift instructor training to the 62 AS.

Though most of the work was mundane, twenty-four aircraft from the 62 AS took part in "Operation Ocean Venture '92" during the spring of 1992. While in the Caribbean, the crew assisted 101st Airborne training operations over the clear blue sea.

The base received another addition when ground-breaking ceremonies for the new 62 AS operations building took place in April, 2001. The \$7,800,000 building would be of the new-style brick design similar to the one built for the 50th and 53rd Airlift Squadrons.

As the environment in today's military has evolved, so has the 62 Airlift Squadron, transitioning from Air Combat Command into Air Education and Training Command on April 1, 1997. As part of this change, the Blue Barons have continually refined their essential role in providing the worldwide C-130 community with highly skilled tactical airlift crewmembers, and at the same time, evolving to meet the needs of a peacetime military force.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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#### Sources

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The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

Unit yearbook. *314 Troop Carrier Wing, Sewart AFB. 1960*

Timothy Burford and Stephanie Burford. Little Rock AFB, AR. *Heartland, The History of Little Rock AFB*. WireStorm Publishing. Las Vegas, NV. 2002.