

## 78 AIR REFUELING SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

78 Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 30 Jan 1943

Activated, 25 Feb 1943

Inactivated, 15 Nov 1945

Activated in the Reserve, 17 Jul 1947

Redesignated 78 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 26 Jun 1949

Ordered to active service, 1 Mar 1951

Inactivated, 1 Dec 1952

Activated in the Reserve, 1 Dec 1952

Inactivated, 24 Mar 1954

Activated in the Reserve, 1 Apr 1955

Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957

Activated in the Reserve, 8 May 1959

Redesignated 78 Troop Carrier Squadron, Heavy, 8 May 1961

Ordered to active service, 1 Oct 1961

Relieved from active duty, 27 Aug 1962

Redesignated 78 Air Transport Squadron, Heavy, 1 Dec 1965

Redesignated 78 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Redesignated 78 Special Operations Squadron, 1 Apr 1972

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1973

Redesignated 78 Air Refueling Squadron, Heavy (Associate), 25 Mar 1981

Activated in the Reserve, 1 Nov 1981

Redesignated 78 Air Refueling Squadron (Associate), 1 Feb 1992

Redesignated 78 Air Refueling Squadron, 1 Oct 1994

## **STATIONS**

Bowman Field, KY, 25 Feb 1943  
Sedalia AAFld, MO, 4 May 1943  
Pope Field, NC, 2 Jul 1943  
Baer Field, IN, 9-13 Oct 1943  
Langer, England, 4 Nov 1943  
Welford Park, England, Jan 1944 (detachment operated from Tarquinia, Italy, 20 Jul-23 Aug 1944)  
Bretigny, France, 19 Feb-Jun 1945  
Baer Field, IN, 5 Aug 1945  
Kellogg Field, MI, 23 Aug-15 Nov 1945  
Jacksonville Muni Aprt, FL, 17 Jul 1947  
Miami Intl Aprt, FL, 26 Jun 1949-1 Dec 1952  
Miami Intl Aprt, FL, 1 Dec 1952-24 Mar 1954  
Orlando AFB, FL, 1 Apr 1955-16 Nov 1957  
Bates Field, AL, 8 May 1959  
Barksdale AFB, LA, 8 May 1961-1 Oct 1973  
Barksdale AFB, LA, 1 Nov 1981  
McGuire AFB, NJ, 1 Oct 1994

## **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Donaldson AFB, SC, 14-28 Aug 1960

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

435 Troop Carrier Group, 25 Feb 1943-15 Nov 1945  
435 Troop Carrier Group, 17 Jul 1947-1 Dec 1952  
435 Troop Carrier Group, 1 Dec 1952-24 Mar 1954  
435 Troop Carrier Group, 1 Apr 1955-16 Nov 1957  
435 Troop Carrier Wing, 8 May 1959  
917 Troop Carrier (later, 917 Air Transport; 917 Military Airlift; 917 Special Operations) Group, 17 Jan 1963-1 Oct 1973  
452 Air Refueling Wing, 1 Nov 1981  
98 Air Refueling Group, 1 Oct 1987  
98 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992  
514 Operations Group, 1 Oct 1994

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-53, 1943-1945  
C-47, 1943-1945  
CG-4 glider, 1943-1945  
Horsa glider, 1943-1945  
C-46, 1944-1945  
C-46, 1947-1951  
C-119, 1951-1952

C-46, 1952-1954  
C-46, 1955-1957  
C-119, 1959-1961  
C-124, 1961-1972  
A-37, 1972-1973  
KC-10, 1981

## **COMMANDERS**

Lt Col Bertie E. Hanson, 25 Feb 1943-1945  
Unkn, 17 Jul 1947-1951  
Maj Elmer W. Harris, 1 Mar 1951  
Maj Bert E. Sanborn, Nov 1951  
Maj Clifford C. Root, 26 Feb 1952  
Capt James L. Hill, Jul 1952  
Maj Clifford C. Root, unkn-1 Dec 1952  
Unkn, 1 Dec 1952-24 Mar 1954  
Unkn, 1 Apr 1955-16 Nov 1957  
Lt Col Stanley V. Rush, 8 May 1959  
Maj William A. Willis, Jul 1960 (Interim), 9 Oct 1960 (permanent)  
Lt Col William G. Paine, 8 May 1961  
Maj William F. Keaster, 5 Nov 1961  
Lt Col William G. Paine, 28 Aug 1962  
Maj James L. Cathey, Jr., 17 Jan 1963  
Maj L. V. Ruffin, 1 Jul 1963  
Maj Albert L. Bunnell, 22 Aug 1966  
Maj Raymond L. Armour, 19 Sep 1966  
Col Joseph H. McClelland Jr., Dec 1967  
Lt Col William T. Gattis, Dec 1968  
Lt Col Harry J. Gilbert, Sep 1970  
Col Raymond L. Armour, Jun 1971  
Lt Col Aylmer B. Post, Jr., Dec 1971  
Lt Col Thomas J. Connelly, Apr 1972  
Lt Col Billy R. Henderson, 28 Jun 1972  
Maj Benjamin Voss, 10 Nov 1972-1 Oct 1973  
Maj Russell T. Olson, 1 Nov 1981  
Lt Col Bernard L. Talley Jr., 2 Aug 1982  
Lt Col Ronald M. Hodges, 17 Nov 1985  
Lt Col Jon E. Mickley, 1 Nov 1986  
Lt Col Edward H. Rooks, 21 Feb 1988  
Lt Col Gerald P. Fitzgerald, 24 Feb 1990  
Lt Col Anthony P. Capoccia, 23 Sep 1992  
Lt Col John R. Thomas, 23 Jan 1993  
Lt Col Lawrence Cremo, 26 Aug 1995  
Lt Col John C. Hildebrand, Jr., 1 Nov 1998

Lt Col Stephen J. DeWerff, 1 Feb 2001  
Col Thomas Ayers

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamer**

World War II  
Rome-Arno  
Normandy  
Northern France  
Southern France  
Rhineland  
Ardennes-Alsace  
Central Europe

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Panama, 1989-1990

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation  
France 5-7 Jun 1944

#### **Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

1 Aug 1967-25 Oct 1968  
1 Oct 1984-30 Aug 1986  
1 Oct 1995-30 Sep 1997

#### **Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm**

1 Apr 1966-31 Mar 1972  
26-28 Oct 1972

#### **EMBLEM**

On a light grayed blue disc, thin border of the same, piped white, a caricatured two motor aircraft camouflaged green and white, yellow wings and tail rudder hinge, flaps orange, shark face painted on nose, diving and towing a caricatured paratrooper in white flight suit, green helmet and orange boots, wearing a yellow parachute pack and carrying a red "tommy" gun, trimmed yellow, all emitting white curved speed lines to rear. (Approved, 26 Oct 1943. Approved, 17 Aug 1984)



Per fess Argent and as water in base Gules, on the First a stylized tree line abased Vert, debruised by a riverboat arraswise fumant to sinister of the First (White) detailed Sable, surmounted and reflected in base of the like, all within a diminished bordure Or. Attached above the disc, a Silver Gray scroll with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "78 AIR REFUELING SQ" in Yellow letters. Attached below the disc, a Silver Gray scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "CAPTAIN SHREVE SQUADRON" in Yellow 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. In its day, the riverboat was the most versatile and largest transportation vehicle available, a comparison made to the present day KC-10, which the unit supports.

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

During World War II, transported personnel and cargo in ETO and MTO; participated in Allied airborne assaults on Normandy, Southern France, the Netherlands, and Germany. Airlift training and worldwide airlift operations, 1947-1951, 1952-1954, 1955-1957, 1959-1961, and 1962-1972. Worldwide aerial refueling and airlift operations since 1981. In Dec 1989 refueled aircraft on way to Panama during Operation Just Cause. During Operation Desert Shield in 1990, its crews refueled more than a hundred aircraft on their way from the United States to the Persian Gulf area and delivered passengers and cargo.

Aircrews that fly KC-10 are used to filling the fuel tanks of other aircraft, but on Jan. 9 they performed a mission to fill the fuel tanks of hungry people, as they helped transport 45,000 pounds of food to impoverished Afghans. Reservists from the 78 Air Refueling Squadron flew to Minneapolis-St. Paul Air Reserve Station, Minn., to load the humanitarian cargo, which consisted of boxes of fortified rice and dried vegetable meals.

The crew then moved the cargo to the aerial port at Joint Base Charleston from where it will be flown to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, to be distributed by U.S. Army personnel to people living in the country's Bamiyan region, located several hours west of Bagram. The food will reduce the threat of starvation during Afghanistan's harsh winter. Although flying privately donated humanitarian cargo is not one of the Air Force's primary missions, organizations may request their donation be transported through the Denton Program.

Jeremiah Denton, a former Alabama U.S. senator and Vietnam prisoner of war, sponsored the program, which allows donations to be transported on military aircraft on a space available basis at the convenience of the military. "I already love doing my job, but it's even better getting to do it knowing we helped people in an impoverished country," said Capt. Christopher Sampson, the lead pilot who flew the mission. "It is very easy to see pallets in the cargo area as simply freight on its way to a destination, but at the end of the day, those pallets contained 45,000 pounds-worth of food for needy people thousands of miles away."

The mission had more than a humanitarian impact. It also provided a training opportunity for the Reserve crew. Since the KC-10's primary role is that of an airborne tanker, missions that call on the aircraft's secondary role of cargo transport can be infrequent. "Denton cargo gives us an opportunity to practice our secondary role, adding a dynamic to the mission that is impossible to obtain on local training flights," Sampson said. The Air Force is no stranger to delivering humanitarian supplies to foreign countries.

In fact, one of the Air Force's first major challenges was transporting humanitarian cargo during the Berlin Airlift, which was one of the defining events of the Cold War. The massive airlift operation was an early triumph for the young Air Force, and signified air power's contribution to rebuilding democracy in post-World War II Europe. Although Denton missions cannot match the scope of the Berlin Airlift, they can contribute to an overall rebuilding strategy in Afghanistan. Sampson said humanitarian efforts like the Denton mission demonstrate how the United States truly cares about people in need around the globe. 2012

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USAF Unit Histories  
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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.