

## 86th AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

86<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron (Cargo and Mail) constituted, 30 Mar 1943

Activated, 15 Apr 1943

Redesignated 86<sup>th</sup> Transportation Squadron (Cargo and Mail), 24 Jun 1944

Disbanded, 15 Nov 1945

Reconstituted and redesignated 86<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Squadron, Medium, 20 Jun 1952

Activated, 20 Jul 1952

Inactivated, 1 Jul 1955

Activated, 21 Dec 1962

Organized, 8 Jan 1963

Redesignated 86<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron, 8 Jan 1966

Redesignated 86<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, 1 Nov 1991

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1993

Redesignated 86<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Airlift Squadron and converted to provisional status, 10 Dec 2012

### STATIONS

Hendon, England, 15 Apr 1943

Heston, England, 6 Jan 1944

Le Bourget, France, 10 Oct 1944

Villacoublay, France, 16 Mar 1945

Le Harve, France, 17 Jul 1945

New York, NY, 31 Jul 1945

Baer Field, IN, 3 Aug 1945

Marfa Field, TX, 12 Sep-15 Nov 1945  
Rhein-Main AB, Germany, 20 Jul 1952  
Charleston AFB, SC, May 1954-1 Jul 1955  
Travis AFB, CA, 8 Jan 1963-1 Oct 1993

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

27<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Group, 15 Apr 1943  
I Troop Carrier Command, 3 Aug 1945  
IX Troop Carrier Command, 4 Nov-15 Nov 1945  
1602<sup>nd</sup> Air Transport Wing, 20 Jul 1952  
1608<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Group, 18 May 1954-12 Jul 1955  
Military Air Transport Service, 21 Dec 1962  
1501<sup>st</sup> Air Transport Wing, 8 Jan 1963  
60<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing, 8 Jan 1966  
60<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Group, 6 Mar 1978  
60<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing, 15 Feb 1979  
60<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 1 Nov 1991-1 Oct 1993  
United States Air Forces in Europe to activate or inactivate at any time on or after 10 Dec 2012

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-47  
C-47A  
C-47B  
Unkn, 1952-1955  
C-130, 1963-1966  
C-130E  
C-141, 1966-1993

### **COMMANDERS**

Maj Frank C. Crowley, 15 Apr 1943  
Cpt Russel M. Molyneaux, 14 Sep 1943  
Maj Phillip D. Parkinson, 18 Oct 1943-1945  
Maj Everett W. Langworthy, 20 Jul 1952  
LTC John R. Neal, 6 Oct 1952  
LTC Judd M. Carrithers, 1 May 1954-unkn  
Maj William L. Whalley, 8 Jan 1963  
LTC Donald H. Ross, 11 Mar 1963  
LTC Charles G. Ferran, 16 Apr 1963  
LTC Earl W. Von Kaenel, 24 Sep 1964  
LTC Richard R. Anderson, 16 May 1966  
LTC Ralph L. Leslie, 1 Aug 1967  
LTC Robert W. Taylor, 1 Jun 1969  
LTC Edward L. Burkley, 13 Jul 1970  
LTC William G. Podoll, 5 Jan 1971

LTC Thomas C. Long Jr., 18 Oct 1971  
LTC Jerry Hummel, Dec 1972  
LTC William K. Griffin, Jun 1973  
LTC Jack L. Ritter, Sep 1974  
LTC John B. Ferrata Jr., Dec 1975  
LTC Jerry P. Harmon, 9 Jun 1976  
LTC Joseph R. Brand, 20 Jun 1977  
LTC Leonard J. Augustine, Dec 1979  
LTC Robert A. Larsen, 17 Feb 1981  
LTC Adrian L. Svoboda, 28 May 1982  
LTC Brooke P. Bailey, 25 Jul 1983  
LTC James R. East, 14 May 1984  
LTC Edward G. Hoffman, 25 Nov 1985  
LTC Robert I. Lawrence, 15 Jun 1987  
LTC Phillip W. Spiker, Jun 1989  
LTC David C. Moulds, 22 May 1991  
LTC Thomas P. Kane, 13 Jul 1992-1 Oct 1993

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II  
EAME Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
1 Jul 1965-30 Jun 1966  
1 Jul 1966-30 Jun 1967  
1 Jul 1967-30 Jun 1968  
1 Jul 1974-30 Jun 1975  
1 Jul 1975-30 Jun 1977  
16 Dec 1989-31 Jan 1990

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm  
1 Apr 1966-28 Jan 1973

## **EMBLEM**



On an Air Force blue disc within a white border edged Old Glory Red, a white Centaur bendwise, arms out reached preparing to launch a white airfoil with sinister (left) hand between in upper sinister a white parachute attached to a white bundle and in lower dexter (right) a white pallet and cargo all edged and detailed Old Glory Red. Above the disc a blank white scroll edged Old Glory Red. Below a like scroll inscribed "Versatile - Dependable" in Air Force blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the squadron and its mission. The Centaur, a mythical heraldic symbol, alludes to the squadrons' ruggedness and versatility, while the airfoil which he is about to launch represents the unit in performance of its mission of air transport. The parachute, bundles, pallet and the cargo depict the capability of the unit's mission of troop and cargo delivery. The emblem bears the national colors red, white and blue. (Approved, 20 May 1964)

#### **MOTTO**

VERSATILE - DEPENDABLE

#### **NICKNAME**

#### **OPERATIONS**

Transported passengers and cargo and ferried aircraft within European areas, 1943-1945.

In April when the group was activated, the title, 86th Transport Squadron, was given to that unit at Hendon. The ferry organization at Warton was activated as the 87th Transport Squadron. The unit in Cornwall was named the 519th Service Squadron, and that at Prestwick the 520th Service Squadron. No sooner were they officially named, than each went far over its authorized strength. In the winter of 1943, additional units were added to the group. These included the 320th and 321st Transport Squadrons and the 311th, 312th and 325th Ferrying Squadrons. These added to the units already in operation went to compose a strong service organization capable of performing almost any mission in the field of transport or aircraft ferrying.

The group using the 10th Airdrome Squadron, the 86th Transport and the 325th Ferrying Squadron operated Heston airdrome until after the first six months of the Continental invasion. In August 1944, the pilots of the 86th Transport Squadron averaged over 100 flying hours each; the 310th Ferrying Squadron made over 3,000 deliveries; Lt Harry Oberholtzer drew a secret assignment carry him to Teheran, Bari, Cairo, Casa Blanca and Russia; and the 325th Ferrying Squadron was still operating traffic detachments all over the United Kingdom.

The 87th Transport Squadron supplemented the service of A.T.C. in hauling priority freight to the theater by flying converted B-24s to and from Wright Field at Dayton, Ohio. This was a trip fought for by every pilot and crew of the group.

The 86th Transport Squadron continued its steady grind of hauling passengers and mail in and exit of London, calling at Prestwick, Langford Lodge near Belfast, North Ireland, Warton, Burtonwood, and later St Mawgan in Cornwall.

The 86th Transport Squadron were ordered to "rough it" by moving into tents in "buzz bomb alley".

The 86th Transport Squadron, with Lt Daniel Early Jr moved its ground echelon to France.

The 86th Transport Squadron pitched a tent near the flight line to offer protection against the winter winds and mud for its crew chiefs. This squadron carried over 745 tons, plus 1168 evacuees and 3000 passengers during November. Warrant Officer W. D. McCormick, the squadron's favored adjutant, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious services in that capacity.

In the 86th Transport Squadron, old timers holding well deserved ratings were at the same time, as in other squadrons, holding back the advancement of other deserving men. Pfc Fred A. Schimpfle was one of these, having served as a superior crew chief for twelve months with the squadron. It was this squadron that furnished the bulk of the personnel for Project "A" in Sweden. This personnel was later transferred to units under Wing control due to their extended and unforeseen absence.

Also during the winter Captain Hartwell Lancaster replaced Major Phillip Parkinson as

commanding officer of the 86th Transport Squadron, who transferred to A.T.C. Captain Lancaster and Lieutenants Gerald Denman and Sarkis Samarian made a special flight to Iceland. Lieutenant Harold Linville was named Operations Officer replacing Captain Lancaster.

86th Transport Squadron lost one of its most experienced crews when Lt Mellers and Lampman, Technical Sergeants Ruddy and Filkins while carrying 5, 000 pounds of 100 octane gasoline to front line units disappeared.

The military situation of the Allies in early summer of 1942 could be summarized by the optimistic as bad. U-Boats were cutting heavily into shipping, and everywhere the Allied armies were in retreat. As a consequence, the Eighth Air Force's objective in the European Theater was the establishment of a massive air force to strike at the very heart of the German industrial sectors. Despite the high shipping losses, vast amounts of war material were being landed and all types of military aircraft were being ferried across the North Atlantic in ever increasing numbers. All the rail, truck, and other transportation facilities within the United Kingdom were greatly over worked. A vital need arose for an Air Transport Service to fly (1) high priority traffic within the United Kingdom, (2) passengers, mail, and cargo to and from important geographical locations within the United Kingdom, and (3) for a ferry service to deliver military aircraft from the depots and ferry terminals to operational fields within the United Kingdom.

The Eighth Air Force Service Command was allotted the task of creating the service to fill these needs. Major General Frank, commanding the 8th Air Force Service Command, directed Major Arthur J. Pearce to form a provisional group to be known as the "Ferry and Transport Service." In August 1942 Major Pearce assigned Major Frank C. Crowley to Hendon to assume command of our small detachment of selected officers and enlisted men with the assigned task of creating an airline to operate from that Aerodrome. Major Crowley, an able executive and an expert pilot backed by 27 years of flying experience, was a wise choice. With three Douglas transports and associated equipment, and with our personnel consisting of only 13 officers and 30 enlisted men, an "airline" came into existence.

Scheduled flights were soon in operation between Hendon Aerodrome (the London Terminal) and important military locations throughout Northern Ireland, Scotland, and England. Despite the shortage of flying equipment and trained personnel the "airline" attained early success. From August 1942 until it became the 86th Transport Squadron, 27th Air Transport Group, AFSC on the 15th of April, 1943, this airline carried over 12,000 passengers, 144,000 lbs. of priority mail, and over 3.6 million pounds of air freight. These record traffic movements were completed without any casualties and a record of no forced landings due to mechanical or engine failure. However, on one flight our pilot did overshoot the end of the runway, at a base somewhere in southern England. When we came to rest, the perimeter road was behind us. I do not know why, but someone started laughing, then we all started laughing for several minutes before any effort was made to get out of the aircraft. When we stopped laughing we found that we had to go out of the top hatch.

Among passengers of note were Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, Admiral Starke, and

Ambassador Winant, as well as hundreds of other prominent people. On the 9th of November 1942 we flew Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the President's wife, to Northern Ireland from Hendon and returned on the 13th. I was lucky enough to have been the radio operator on this trip. I have her signature on a pound note along with that of Bob Hope and others.

Sometime around the beginning of September the local British Telephone Exchange at Colindale invited the members of the RAF Sgt.'s Mess at Hendon to their annual Red Cross Exchange Dance. This was being held at the Red Lion Pub at nearby Edgar. This is when and where I first met my future wife, Doris Eleanor (Atkins) Cook. On the 6th of November became engaged.

When the "Air Section" was activated at Hendon Aerodrome the C-47s we received came with their crews "on temporary loan" from Troop Carrier Command. One of the conditions of the loan was that they needed the aircraft they would be returned." On the 8th of Nov 1942 the Allies landed in North Africa. During the invasion more aircraft were lost than anticipated. Troop Carrier Command quickly called for aircraft. As the crews originally came with the aircraft, the question as to whether they wanted the crews, also. Consequently, our commanding officer decided to take a gamble and send different crews.

On the 17th of November 1943 the three aircraft took off from He and landed at Hum Airport near Bournemouth, on the south coast of England. The next day the aircraft were loaded with "combat-ready troop along with their equipment and supplies. The flight crews were briefed the flight to North Africa. We then flew overnight to an airport along the coast of Algeria, North Africa. It was a beautiful flight, a full moon and rolling white clouds. We skimmed the clouds, staying! case we were attacked. We landed to refuel and then continued on to We spent two nights there. The first night we slept on the hangar floor: next night we decided to sleep on the ground, beneath the airplane, felt that the ground would be softer. On the second day our worries over, as we were ferried back to Gibraltar. Shortly thereafter we on a boat back to England. My pilot on this trip was Lt. Lancaster. I was back two days before my 21st birthday.

Transported passengers and cargo in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, 1952-1954.

Airlifted passengers and cargo world-wide, but primarily in the Pacific area, 1963-1993.

The five C-47s from the 86th still had our group emblem on the nose. It was a large orange circle with Sad Sack carrying a pack on his back. A Bing Crosby movie was showing in Lulea, so we painted the words "VANDRA MIN VAG" under Sad Sack (Swedish for "GOING MY WAY"). The entire group did not return to Stockholm together until we left the country, but individual planes went back and forth, usually with Colonel Balchen and Colonel Dahl, who was the head of the Norwegian underground, on board. It was strange to sit in the plane at Bromma and watch German planes from Berlin land, unload, and return to Berlin. I took three such trips, with Colonel Balchen, Captain Charles G. "Pappy" Holliman, Colonel Dahl, Alex Dobrowen (interpreter), Crew Chief Joe Gasselein, and two or three others I did not know. I was on these flights because their regular radio operator, Bill Rosenthal, was sick. One was on Christmas Day when a Swedish princess had us to lunch at the palace, where 80 plus year old King Gustav made a brief

appearance. He just dropped in on his way to play tennis.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

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