

96 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



MISSION

The 96 Airlift Squadron mission is to train and equip fourteen aircrews for worldwide mobilization and deployment of all unit personnel, equipment, and aircraft on short notice to establish and sustain operations under combat conditions. The deployed unit will conduct airland and airdrop of personnel, equipment, and supplies, and support aeromedical evacuation airlift. The 96 Airlift Squadron is authorized 150 personnel consisting of pilots, navigators, flight engineers, loadmasters, life support technicians, administrative specialists. There are 15 full time Air Reserve Technicians (ARTs).

LINEAGE

96 Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 25 May 1943
Activated, 1 Jul 1943
Inactivated, 18 Oct 1945
Activated in the Reserve, 6 Mar 1947
Redesignated 96 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 27 Jun 1947
Ordered to Active Service, 1 May 1951
Inactivated, 4 May 1951
Redesignated 96 Fighter Bomber Squadron, 26 May 1952
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952
Redesignated 96 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 8 Sep 1957
Ordered to Active Service, 28 Oct 1962
Relieved from Active Duty, 28 Nov 1962

Redesignated 96 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Jul 1967
Redesignated 96 Airlift Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

STATIONS

Baer Field, IN, 1 Jul 1943
Sedalia AAFld, MO, 9 Jul 1943
Alliance AAFld, NE, 7 Sep 1943
Pope Field, NC, 4 Jan 1944
Baer Field, IN, 14-21 Feb 1944
Bottesford, England, 10 Mar 1944
Exeter, England, 26 Apr 1944 (operated from Ombrone Airfield, Italy, 18 Jul-24 Aug 1944)
Reims, France, 9 Sep 1944
Le Mans, France, 28 Sep 1944
Bricy/Orleans, France, 4 Nov 1944-18 Oct 1945
Scott Field, IL, 6 Mar 1947
Wold-Chamberlain Muni Aprt, MN, 27 Jun 1949-4 May 1951
Ft Snelling, MN, 15 Jun 1952
Minneapolis-St Paul IAP (later, Minneapolis-St Paul IAP-ARS), MN, 8 Jan 1953

ASSIGNMENTS

440 Troop Carrier Group, 1 Jul 1943-18 Oct 1945
Second Air Force, 6 Mar 1947
440 Troop Carrier Group, 3 Sep 1947-4 May 1951
440 Fighter-Bomber (later, 440th Troop Carrier) Group, 15 Jun 1952
440 Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Apr 1959
934 Troop Carrier (later, 934th Tactical Airlift; 934th Airlift) Group, 11 Feb 1963
934 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1943-1945
C-46, 1947-1951
F-51, 1952-1955
F-80, 1955-1957
C-119, 1957-1970
C-130, 1970

COMMANDERS

Capt Glenn E. W. Mann Jr., 1 Jul 1943
Maj William R. Cooper, 11 Sep 1943
Maj George M. Johnson Jr., 23 Aug 1944-unkn
Unkn, 6 Mar 1947-1950
Maj Perry W. Kempster, Nov 1950-unkn
Unkn, 15 Jun 1952-1953
Lt Col William J. Stuart, Aug 1953-unkn

Maj Richard C. Bushee, 19 Dec 1958
Lt Col Dodson B. Graybeal, 24 May 1959
Lt Col James R. Bradford, Jan 1964
Lt Col Harry E. Anderson, 11 Jul 1967
Lt Col Donald E. Haugen, Sep 1969
Lt Col Harold E. Gifford, Sep 1970
Lt Col Philip A. Larson, Mar 1972
Col Jon M Robb, 18 Mar 1974
Lt Col Russell T. Roe Jr., Jul 1977
Lt Col Donald W. Hillman, Dec 1980
Lt Col Richard R. Severson, 28 Oct 1981
Col James E. Thomas, Jul 1984
Lt Col William G. Ferguson, 20 May 1985
Lt Col Dennis C. Kernes, Dec 1987
Lt Col Dermod F. Norton, Dec 1988
Maj Gerald C. Vonberge, Jan 1990
Lt Col Timothy L. Anderson, 1 Sep 1990
Lt Col Ronald L. Weight, 1 Jul 1993
Lt Col Curtis N. Breeding, 2 Apr 1995
Lt Col Jeff W. Hamiel, 13 Jul 1997
Lt Col John C. Rudin, 5 Apr 1998
Lt Col Douglas D. Trogstad, 5 Nov 2000
Lt Col Craig A. Trammell, Dec 2007
Lt Col Bruce D. Wiskus, 6 Aug 2011
Lt Col Matthew C. Misenor, 9 Apr 2019

HONOR

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

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

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Panama, 1989-1990

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
France, [6-7] Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Oct 1988-30 Sep 1990
1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1996
30 Sep 1998-1 Oct 2000
1 Sep 2002-31 Aug 2004; 1 Sep 2005-31 Aug 2007.

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm
14 Feb-11 Mar 1968

EMBLEM



96 Troop Carrier Squadron emblem: On and over a globe divided Air Force blue and white by a stylized Air Force golden yellow eagle in profile flight grid lines counterchanged, the Eagle's wings raise and extending above the- border in chief, his head and tail white, beak and talons Air Force golden yellow, his eye red; grasped in the eagle's talons and extending beyond the border in sinister base a red packing box; in sinister seven Air Force golden yellow stars placed between the grid lines; outlines and details black throughout. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem is symbolic of the squadron and its mission. Against a background of the globe, indicative of world-wide operational capability, an eagle in flight, representing movement, bears a packing box to indicate transportation of equipment, supplies, or personnel. The deep blue of the water areas and the white of the land areas also suggest night and day operations. The stars symbolize the seven bronze battle stars awarded to the 440th Troop Carrier Wing of which this unit was a part, during the Central European campaigns of World War II. The emblem bears the Air Force colors, ultramarine blue and golden yellow, and the national colors, red, white, and blue. (18 Jul 1960)



96 Tactical Airlift Squadron emblem



96 Airlift Squadron emblem: On a disc Purpure, a Viking head couped Buff to sinister detailed Gold Brown, hair and mustache Or detailed and edged of the third, helm of the last garnished Or horned Argent, all within a narrow border Azure. Attached above the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "FLYING VIKINGS" in Blue letters. Attached below the disc, a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "96 AIRLIFT SQ" in Blue 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. The Viking head symbolizes the unit's strength and consistent performance through a changing mission. The determined face of the Viking also represents the desire to meet and overcome obstacles and future challenges as well as alluding to the area's rich Scandinavian heritage. The two horns of the helmet refer to the dual mission of tactical airlift and airdrop. (Approved, 18 Jun 1997)



96 Airlift Squadron emblem: Azure, a Viking head couped Buff detailed Sable, hair and mustache Or helm Gold Brown garnished Yellow horned Argent; all within a diminished bordure of the first. Attached above the disc a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed 96TH AIRLIFT SQ in Blue letters. Attached below the disc a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed " FLYING VIKINGS" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and 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. The Viking head symbolizes the unit's strength and consistent performance through a changing mission. The determined face of the Viking also represents the desire to meet and overcome obstacles and future challenges as well as alluding to the area's rich Scandinavian heritage. The two horns of the helmet refer to the dual mission of tactical airlift and airdrop. (Approved, 18 Jun 1997)

96 Airlift Squadron emblem: On a purple disk, the 96th Airlift Squadron emblem consists of a determined expressed Viking head looking forward to future challenges. The battle helmet is gold brown with white horns. His hair and mustache are yellow with gold brown definition. The face is buff with blue highlights defining his chiseled features. The upper scroll FLYING VIKINGS and lower scroll 96th AIRLIFT SQ are lettered in blue over a yellow background. The entire emblem is bordered in blue. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Blue and 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. Purple serves as the background symbolizing courage and determination. The Viking head symbolizes the unit's strength and consistent performance through a changing mission. The determined face of the Viking also represents the desire to meet and overcome obstacles and future challenges as well as alluding to the area's rich Scandinavian heritage. The two horns of the helmet suggest purity of purpose and refer to the dual mission of tactical airlift and airdrop. All elements are represented by the unit's motto: FLYING VIKINGS (Approved, 24 Aug 2007)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

During World War II, airborne assaults on Normandy, Southern France, Holland, and Germany; relief of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge in Dec 1944; transportation of cargo and personnel in ETO and MTO.

Trained in troop carrier operations, 1947-1951, fighter-bomber operations, 1952-1957, and troop carrier operations and worldwide airlift after 1957.

The 96 Troop Carrier Squadron activated on 1 Jul 1943 at Baer Field, IN, moving to Sedalia Army Air Field, Missouri on 9 Jul 1943, and Alliance Army Air Field, Nebraska on 7 Sep 1943. At Alliance Army Air Field, the squadron continued basic military and flying training in C-47 transport aircraft. Towing baggage-laden gliders, the squadron transferred to Pope Army Air Field, North Carolina on 4 Jan 1944. There it practiced glider towing, paratrooper drops, and airborne resupply under simulated combat conditions. It returned to Baer Field in mid-Feb 1944 to process for overseas deployment and then departed from Camp Shanks, New York aboard the U.S.S. Pasteur on 14 Mar 1944. Arriving at Bottesford, England, on 23 Mar 1944, it deployed its 19 C-47A aircraft to Exeter in late Apr. Dropped paratroopers over Carentan, France on 6 Jun 1944 during D-Day assault on Normandy Coast. On 16 Jul 1944, it deployed 13 aircraft to Ombone air strip near Grosseto, Italy. These aircraft dropped paratroopers and towed gliders during 15 Aug invasion of southern France. From Fullbrook, England, the air echelon later participated in Operation Market Garden, the ill-fated mass paratroop drop over Holland on 17 Sep 1944. From an airfield near Rheims, France, the 96 Squadron flew routine supply missions until Dec 1944, when it airdropped supplies to the beleaguered 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne. During Operation Varsity, 24 Mar 1945, it dropped elements of the 17th Airborne Division to screen the Rhine crossing for the British Second Army. An advanced echelon temporarily deployed to an airstrip near Jarny Metz, France, and resupplied allied forces overrunning Germany in Mar-Apr 1945. After the German surrender, the squadron evacuated wounded from Germany to hospitals in France and England. Inactivated in Europe on 18 Oct 1945.

Activated in the reserve on 6 Mar 1947, the squadron moved to Wold-Chamberlain Municipal Airport, Minneapolis, Minnesota on 27 Jun where it flew C-46 aircraft. Called to active service on 1 May 1951, it inactivated three days later.

Activated in the reserve as the 96 Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 15 June 1952, it was equipped with F-51, and later, F-80 aircraft. Redesignated the 96 Troop Carrier Squadron on 8 Sep 1957, it was reequipped with C-119 transport aircraft. Ferried C-119 aircraft to India in the summer of 1960 and to France in Mar 1961. In the early 1960s, participated in reserve exercises and ferried passengers and supplies as required. From 1 Jan-30 Jun 1962, for example, 96th Squadron aircraft dropped or assault landed 2216 troops and 42 tons of cargo. During the same period it airlifted 440 Civil Air Patrol cadets, 28 Air Force Academy aviators, 47 CONAC Band members and seven tons of cargo to various destinations. Ordered to active duty for 26 days during the Cuban Crisis, Oct-Nov 1962, it logged 492 flying hours. As the conflict in Southeast Asia and associated domestic turmoil intensified, the 96 Tactical Airlift Squadron undertook a variety of support missions. During the first half of 1966, its aircraft replaced Military Airlift Command (MAC) aircraft flying logistical support missions to Goose AFB, Labrador, and the Bahamas Islands. Their employment on these flights enabled MAC to fly more SEA missions.

During Operation Combat Leave, 10 Jul-10 Sep 1966, Squadron transported to their destinations 618 servicemen stranded during an airlines strike. During the riots accompanying the assassination of Martin Luther King, it flew troops assigned to quell civic disorder to staging areas outside major cities. Transitioned to C-130 aircraft in early 1970 and ferried these aircraft to and from SEA during Nov-Dec 1970. In Jan 1972 the 96 Squadron participated in Brave Shield I, the first joint Army-Air Force exercise involving the U.S. Readiness Command. In Oct 1974, it airlifted 23,000 lbs. of force and medical supplies to La Ceiba, Honduras, to assist hurricane relief. With other reserve units it airlifted snow removal equipment to the northeastern United States during the severe winter of 1977-1978. Later that year, the 96 Squadron began participating in Volant Oak, logistical support of U.S. installations in Central and South America.

In January 1970, the 96 transitioned to the C-130 Hercules. In 1978, the 96 began participating in an almost annual deployment to Howard AFB, Panama to fly logistical support for US installations in Central and South America. Called Operation VOLANT OAK in the beginning, it is now known as PHOENIX OAK.

The 96 was in Panama during part of Operation JUST CAUSE in January and February 1990. That same year, in August 1990 the 96 volunteered for Operation DESERT SHIELD, flying around Europe and the Mediterranean Sea for a month supporting the buildup of forces for the liberation of Kuwait. The squadron's name changed slightly again on 1 February 1992 when it became simply the 96 Airlift Squadron. In July 1992, the 96 was first called on to fly supplies into the beleaguered city of Sarajevo for Operation PROVIDE PROMISE. The 96 was involved with that operation sporadically until January - April 1994 when most of the squadron was involved in flying into Sarajevo and dropping supplies over other towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The 96 also had crews involved with the almost invasion of Haiti in September 1994.

Air Mobility Command accident investigators determined that inadequate visual scanning and overreliance on collision avoidance systems by the crews of an Air Force Reserve Command C-130H and Army Special Operations Command C-27J caused the midair collision of these airplanes near Pope Field, N.C., last December. They found "convincing evidence" that "a breakdown in visual scan" result[ed] in insufficient clearing of the aircraft flight path by both aircrews," states AMC's March 16 release summarizing the accident investigation board's report on the Dec. 1, 2014, mishap. The 440th Airlift Wing's C-130 was pulling up after a nighttime low-level supply drop with night-vision goggles when the C-27J clipped it roughly eight miles south of Mackall AAF, N.C. The C-27 passed head-on diagonally under the C-130, grazing the latter's underside with its wingtip. The C-27's vertical stabilizer struck the C-130's right wing, external fuel tank, and outboard engine nacelle, according to the AIB report. The impact sheared a third of the C-27's vertical tail, but both aircraft landed safely. The C-130, serial number 88-4404, sustained an estimated \$1.8 million in damage and associated cleanup, according to the report. There were no injuries to either crew.2015

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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