

# **108<sup>th</sup> FIGHTER BOMBER GROUP**

## **LINEAGE**

348<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group constituted, 24 Sep 1942

Activated, 30 Sep 1942

Inactivated, 10 May 1946

Redesignated 108<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group and allotted to ANG (NJ), 24 May 1946

Extended federal recognition, 16 Oct 1946

Redesignated 108<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Group,

Redesignated 108<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Group,

Inactivated 9 Dec 1974

## **STATIONS**

Mitchel Field, NY, 30 Sep 1942

Bradley Field, CT, 4 Oct 1942

Westover Field, MA, 29 Oct 1942

Providence, RI, 3 Jan 1943

Westover Field, MA, 28 Apr-9 May 1943

Port Moresby, New Guinea, 23 Jun 1943

Finschhafen, New Guinea, 16 Dec 1943

Saidor, New Guinea, 29 Mar 1944

Wakde, 22 May 1944

Noemfoor, 26 Aug 1944

Leyte, 16 Nov 1944

San Marcelino, Luzon, 4 Feb 1945

Floridablanca, Luzon, 15 May 1945

Ie Shima, 9 Jul 1945

Itami, Japan, Oct 1945-10 May 1946

Newark Mun Aprt, NJ, 1 Mar 1951

Turner AFB, GA, 14 Mar 1951

Godman AFB, KY, 9 Dec 1951-1 Dec 1952

McGuire AFB, NJ

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Fifth AF

Strategic Air Command

Tactical Air Command

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

### **Mission Aircraft**

P-47

F-47

KC-135E

### **Support Aircraft**

## **ASSIGNED TAIL/BASE CODES**

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Neel E. Kearby, Oct 1942

Col Robert R. Rowland, 17 Nov 1943

LTC William M. Banks, 8 Jun 1945

Maj Walter G. Benz, 26 Nov 1945-unkn

Maj J. D. Zink, Mar 1951

Col Alvan C. Gillem II, Jun 1951

Col Carl W. Stapleton, Nov 1951

Col Donald J. Strait, 14 Jan 1952

Col George Laven, Jr., 4 Aug-1 Dec 1952

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

Air Offensive, Japan

China Defensive

New Guinea

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon

China Offensive

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

## **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

New Britain, 16-31 Dec 1943

Philippine Islands, 24 Dec 1944

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

## **EMBLEM**

Azure, within a bordure dimidiated, gules, hand gauntleted in armour proper, encircled with wreath of laurel, vert, grasping a torch argent, flamant proper. (Approved 15 Aug 1951)

## **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

### **MOTTO**

PER CAELUM VICTORIAE—Through the Skies to Victory

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Prepared for combat with P-47s. Moved to the Southwest Pacific, May-Jun 1943. Operated from New Guinea and Noemfoor until Nov 1944. Flew patrol and reconnaissance missions and escorted bombers to targets in New Guinea and New Britain. Col Neel E Kearby was awarded the Medal of Honor for action over New Guinea on 1 Oct 1943: after leading a flight of four fighters to reconnoiter the enemy base at Wewak, Col Kearby sighted a Japanese bomber formation escorted by more than 30 fighters; despite the heavy odds and a low fuel supply, and although his mission had been accomplished, Kearby ordered an attack, personally destroying six of the enemy planes. For covering Allied landings and supporting ground forces on New Britain, 16-31 Dec 1943, the group was awarded a DUG. In 1944 began to attack airfields, installations, and shipping in western New Guinea, Ceram, and Halmahera to aid in neutralizing those areas preparatory to the US invasion of the Philippines. After moving to the Philippines in Nov 1944, provided cover for convoys, flew patrols, escorted bombers, attacked enemy airfields, and supported ground forces. Received a DUG for withstanding assaults by enemy fighters to cover bombers raiding Clark Field on 24 Dec 1944. Also attacked shipping along the China coast and escorted bombers to Formosa and the Asiatic mainland. Moved to the Ryukyus in Jul 1945 and completed some escort and attack missions to Kyushu before the war ended. Moved to Japan in Oct 1945 as part of Far East Air Forces. Called to active duty on 1 Mar 1951. Relieved from active service on 1 Dec 1952 and returned to the control of ANG (NJ)

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 5 Oct 2010

Updated:

Sources