

340th AIRDROME SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

340th Airdrome Squadron
Activated, 22 Apr 1944

STATIONS

Drew Field, FL
Bombay, India
Kalaikunda, India

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 340th Airdrome Squadron was activated May 1, 1944. Captain William L. Reynolds, an Army man from 'way back', was named Commanding Officer. Capt. Reynolds and CWO Winthrop Dodge came to Aiken, South Carolina, to set up the 340th and found that they were the entire

squadron. Within the next few days enlisted men were transferred in from the Liaison Squadrons - - forty-eight from the 155th L.S., ninety-five from the 156th L.S., and forty-seven from the 127th L.S. Many were transferred out as the 340th Table of Organization allowed seven officers and one hundred and eighty enlisted men. Our mission was to be an auxiliary outfit to the three L Squadrons and help them with supplies, mess, and maintenance. Also , landing fields used by the L-squadrons would be maintained by the 340th A.D.S.

The 340th moved with the L-Squadrons to Florida and trained there during the summer. It accompanied other units of the group to Kalaikunda, India. This became the home base of operations. Some units of the 340th were sent to advance bases in Burma as needed, but the main operation of the group was located at Kalaikunda.

HIGHLIGHTS OF JANUARY, 1945

Erecting tents and buildings for operations of squadron duties. Engineering crews were assigned to each Liaison Squadron to maintain aircraft. January 6th - bad storm at night, tents collapsed, poles broke.

January 13th - new jeeps were issued to each section.

January 28th and 29th - were spent unloading new supplies and equipment for the entire group. Individual Tech Supply units were set up for individual squadrons.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FEBRUARY, 1945

More supplies and equipment were received. Men were taken from all sections to put up tents and rearrange supplies.

Routine squadron activities functioned smoothly in all sections - maintenance, guarding, reports, radio, engineering, etc. Some of the men were assigned to group headquarters.

Concrete floors were poured for all tents and squadron buildings.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH, 1945

March 12, 1945, proved to be a day of days for at 2030 the field was hit by a thunder and wind storm. A shower of hailstones as large as baseballs together with high winds and a steady rain literally tore tents, shattered vehicle windshields, etc.. Aircraft were hurled into buildings, tents blown away and a number of men were injured.

On the 13th work began on cleaning up all wreckage. After a hard day's work of rebuilding tents and gathering together all their equipment, the men were able to attend the base theater, hurriedly repaired, to see a movie. A greater morale builder after this devastating storm would be hard to conceive.

By the 14th, the tent area and orderly room was again in excellent condition and the line sections doing fine in the way of reconstruction.

HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL, 1945

The first disaster found the squadron on the 5th of April when Staff Sergeant Alfred R. Moog, a squadron airplane-engine mechanic, was reported missing after going up on a check flight in an L-5 aircraft which he was crewing. At 2100 another fifty mile gale was reported and the necessary precautions were taken, but again the course of the gale moved gradually away from the field.

On 6 April some of the squadron personnel were sent out with the Liaison Squadrons on TDY in the forward area. This was the ambition of every man, but only a few were selected. The only personnel needed were cooks and airplane mechanics, the men are expected to be rotated.

On April 9, 1945, Sergeant Moog was found and returned. The only way possible he could be reached was by foot, but luckily enough he suffered no injuries. He was rather worn out and did need a shave.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MAY, 1945

On May 10, 11, and 12 the men in the forward areas were replaced and other men returned upon completion of their operations in certain areas.

The Second Air Commando Group took over all base functions on the 13th of May. Men were selected from each of the squadrons to work in the Post Exchange, Fire Department, Post Engineer, Power and Water Plant, etc. More enlisted men were sent to the forward area on May 19th. Among them were the squadron medical NCO, squadron first cook, and the squadron supply clerk.

The experiences of Ed Getz and Mel Brown, radio operators of the 340th Airdrome Squadron, illustrate the support function of this squadron to the L Squadrons. Getz and Brown were sent to Myitche in march, 1945, for a six and a half week stay with the 155th Liaison Squadron. Their job along with Walter Van Gieson of Group Headquarters was to set up radio equipment in order to serve as the primary source of communications between Group Headquarters at Kalaikunda and operations in Burma. Mechanics, sheet metal workers, cooks and other personnel needed to help operate forward airstrips were supplied as needed.

Ed Getz was on duty one night in the radio tent and had just finished sending a message to Kalaikunda when he noticed that a mountain lion had just entered the communications tent. The lion sniffed Ed's legs, rubbed against his knees and then quietly left. While the cat was in the tent, there were only two other things moving besides the animal, Ed's eyeballs. Ed did not make a move for the .45 pistol in front of him. He was just thankful the cat left.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.