

358th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, MEDIUM



MISSION

LINEAGE

358th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942
Activated, 3 Feb 1942
Inactivated, 25 Jul 1945
Redesignated 358th Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 11 Jun 1947
Activated, 1 Jul 1947
Inactivated, 6 Sep 1948
Redesignated 358th Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 27 Aug 1951
Activated, 4 Sep 1951

STATIONS

Pendleton Field, OR, 3 Feb 1942
Gowen Field, Idaho, 11 Feb 1942 (operated from Muroc, CA, 28 May-early Jun 1942)
Alamogordo, NM, 18 Jun 1942
Biggs Field, TX, 6-22 Aug 1942
Molesworth, England, 12 Sep 1942
Casablanca, French Morocco, 31 May-25 Jul 1945
Andrews Field, MD, 1 Jul 1947-6 Sep 1948
Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, 4 Sep 1951

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Greenham Common, England, 17 Mar 1954-28 Mar 1954
Fairford, England, 28 Apr 1954-5 Jun 1954

Andersen AFB, Guam, 12 Jul 1956-4 Oct 1956

ASSIGNMENTS

303rd Bombardment Group, 3 Feb 1942-25 Jul 1945

303rd Bombardment Group, 1 Jul 1947-6 Sep 1948

303rd Bombardment Group, 4 Sep 1951

303rd Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1942-1945

B-17E

B-17F

B-17G

B-29, 1951-1953

B-47, 1953

COMMANDERS

Maj George T. Mackin

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine, American Theater

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Germany, 11 Jan 194

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan 1961- 31 Mar 1962

EMBLEM



358th Bombardment Squadron

358th Bombardment Squadron, Medium emblem, On a shield argent a bend wavy azure, spattered with stars of the field color; superimposed over all, an eagle sable, head and detail of the field, feet and beak or, flying to dexter; below his claws in base, an olive branch proper. (Approved, 7 Jun 1956)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine patrols off California coast, late May-early Jun 1942. Combat in ETO, 17 Nov 1942-25 Apr 1945. Apparently not manned, 1947-194

WITH 300 MISSIONS under their belts, members of the 358th Squadron can look back on a great many occasions and things that stand out in the making of those 300 missions. The Squadron's first claim to fame was the possession of the famous old Fortress "Hell's Angels," from which the group took its name. "Hell's Angels" and the "Sky Wolf" and "Jersey Bounce" and the men who flew them set examples of heroism, dependability and stamina that were an inspiration to the group and the Eighth Air Force in the early days in the E.T.O. They were a matter of pride to the men on the ground as well as the combat men, and it was with the pride of possession that the 358th boys would say "Yep. That's our plane," when the names came up in NAAFI or Red Cross bull sessions.

There have been many outstanding "characters" in the squadron. All of the old-timers remember Lt. Robert S. O'Connor who always flew into battle wearing the English bobby's helmet presented to him by the local constable. It was his good luck piece, but his luck finally wore out and he went down over the continent. Captain Jack Watson made the headlines when he flew the "Meat Hound" back from Germany alone in the plane after the crew had bailed out. When he landed in Southern England only two engines were still turning over and one of them was blazing so fiercely that it took crash crews two hours to extinguish the flames. Men of the 358th have had their share of honors in the war. The nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor, went to TSgt. Forrest L. Vosler, radio operator, who fought from his radio gun position when wounded and nearly blinded

and then begged to be thrown overboard to save weight on the battered bomber.

The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded to Lt. Charles W. Spencer, bombardier, after he nearly lost his life in the blown-open nose of a Fort from frostbite and wounds. The Silver Stars, Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals won in the early days by 358th flyers are too numerous to count.

The 358th need not take a back seat to any other outfit for flying ability and leadership. Their crews have always been ready to fly any place, any time and in any position. Their Forts have led the way to Berlin, Merseburg, Aschersleben and the other "toughies," and have been in the roughest fighting to claim their share of enemy fighters. Morale has never sagged. Even after the Oschersleben mission when the 358th took the brunt of the losses, the remaining crews were ready to go again the next day. Sixty empty beds might have wrecked the morale of a lesser outfit. It just made the crews of the 358th a little madder. As a matter of fact, more than a score of ground men have left the comparative safety of line jobs to volunteer for service as gunners.

The 358th has done all right for itself in the matter of squadron commanders. First was Major (now Colonel) Clemens K. Wurzbach, a tall, easy-going Texan. Succeeding him was Major Kirk R. Mitchell from Oklahoma City, who led the 358th on some of its roughest bombing missions. Present commander is Major George T. Mackin of Portland, Oregon, who has been with the group since its arrival in England.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 13 Aug 2011

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Sources

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

Unit history. *303 Bombardment Group, Heavy. The First 300, Hell's Angels.* William H. Evans. Fine Arts Publishing. London, England.