

371st BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, MEDIUM



MISSION

LINEAGE

371st Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942
Activated, 15 Apr 1942
Inactivated, 18 Jan 1946
Redesignated 371st Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 15 Jul 1946
Activated, 4 Aug 1946
Redesignated 371st Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 28 May 1948

STATIONS

Geiger Field, WA, 15 Apr 1942
Ephrata, WA, 28 May 1942
Sioux City AAB, IA, 30 Sep-20 Oct 1942
Wheeler Field, TH, 2 Nov 1942 (operated from Midway, 21-24 Dec 1942 and 20-25 Jan 1943
Canton, 6-12 Feb 1943; Funafuti, 18-23 Apr 1943 and 27 Jul-1 Aug 1943)
Espiritu Santo, 13 Jun 1943 (operated from Guadalcanal, 25 Aug-14 Oct 1943; 24 Nov-31 Dec 1943)
Munda, New Georgia, 9 Jan 1944
Los Negros, 13 May 1944
Wakde, 22 Aug 1944 (operated from Noemfoor, 18 Sep-20 Nov 1944)
Morotai, 10 Nov 1944
Clark Field, Luzon, 1 Sep-27 Dec 1945
Camp Stoneman, CA, 16-18 Jan 1946
MacDill Field, FL, 4 Aug 1946 (operated from Kadena, Okinawa, beginning 5 Aug 1950)
Kadena, Okinawa, 15 Aug 1953
Lincoln AFB, NE, 19 Nov 1954

DEPLOYED STATIONS

RAF Lakenheath, England, 11 Jul 1956-5 Oct 1956

ASSIGNMENTS

307th Bombardment Group, 15 Apr 1942-18 Jan 1946

307th Bombardment Group, 4 Aug 1946

307th Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1942

B-24, 1942-1945

B-29, 1946-1954

B-29A

B-24D

B-47, 1955

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Central Pacific

New Guinea

Northern Solomons

Eastern Mandates

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon

Southern Philippines

Air Combat, Asiatic-Pacific Theater

Korean War

UN Defensive

UN Offensive

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

UN Summer-Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korea Summer-Fall, 1952

Third Korean Winter
Korea Summer-Fall, 1953

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Borneo, 3 Oct 1944
Korea, 11-27 Jul 1953

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation
[Aug] 1950-27 Jul 1953

EMBLEM



371st Bombardment Squadron, Heavy

371st Bombardment Squadron, Medium emblem: On a disc sable bordered or, a shield vert, with a chief sable, chief and shield edged or on a wide sinister bend argent, an eagle or, talons and beak gules, soaring downward to the dexter, trailing power streams gules. (Approved, 4 Sep 1956)

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Sea search from Hawaii, Nov 1942-Jan 1943. Combat in Central Pacific, 22-23 Dec 1942; 20-25 Jan 1943; 6-12 Feb 1943, 18-23 Apr 1943, 27 Jul-1 Aug 1943; South and Southwest Pacific, 26 Aug 1943-11 Aug 1945.

The first strike was aimed at Nauru, an equatorial island south of the Marshalls whose installations produced phosphate and had accounted for eighty percent of Japan's pre-war phosphate production. It was also to be the Seventh's first attack against Japanese industry. On 18 April 1943, General Hale led 24 B-24D's of the 371st and 372nd Bomb Squadrons from Hawaii to Funafuti, a coral atoll scarcely wider than Us runway, 2,300 miles southwest in the Ellice Islands.

After refuelling at Funafuti, 22 Liberators took off before dawn on 21 April and made for Nauru, over a thousand miles to the northwest. The target was reached at noon and bomb runs were made in spite of waiting Japanese fighters and antiaircraft fire from the ground. In all, 28 1000-lb GP and 45 500-lb GP bombs plus 45 fragmentation clusters were dropped from 7,300 to 8,500 feet. Only seven bombs missed the target, three phosphate plants lined up along the shore line. Plant No. 1 was destroyed, Plant No. 2 took three direct hits and Plant No. 3 was demolished. Five B-24s were damaged, with one crewman killed and some six others wounded, but all planes returned safely to Funafuti, completing an excellent mission.

The Japanese soon retaliated for the raid, and at 0330 the following morning their planes raided Funafuti, destroying two B-24s on the ground and damaging five. Some men were killed and the wounded were evacuated to the Samoa Naval Hospital 700 miles away.

This blow did not keep the planes from delivering one more planned attack against Tarawa Island in the Gilberts. The attack was rescheduled from a daylight mission to a night mission and was flown on 23/24 April. Twelve B-24s participated, flying 700 miles northward, and bombed the airfield and revetment area on Tarawa at 0400 by full moonlight. Bombing was good and there was no antiaircraft fire until after the first elements had released. Only one plane was slightly damaged. All then returned to Funafuti and from there the two squadrons flew back to Hawaii.

These strikes, on which the planes flew over 8,000 miles altogether, had been very successful, but they were the only concentrated offensive effort the Seventh was able to put up in the first half of 1943.

There was one more important heavy bomber mission flown by the Seventh in the first half of 1943. Eighteen B-24D's from the 371st and 372nd Squadrons took off early in the morning of 15 May 1943 from Midway to attack water tanks, power and distillation plants and barracks areas on Wake Island. A number of planes failed to find Wake, and only seven bombed the objectives, with poor results. These planes were met by 19 Zekes and 3 Hamps, which attacked the bombers from all directions with nose attacks predominating. The Liberator gunners claimed four enemy fighters destroyed, one probably destroyed and eight damaged.

In early June, the 371st and 372nd Bomb Squadrons left Hawaii for Espiritu Santo and rejoined their parent group under the Thirteenth Air Force.

Training unit for antisubmarine warfare, Sep 1947-May 1948.

Combat in Korea, 9 Aug 1950-27 Jul 1953.

First Lt Robert J. Cox, 371st Bomb Squadron, was presented the "Soldiers Medal" for the outstanding heroism he displayed during a fire on the flight line in November 1956, when he saved the life of an Airman, and prevented further damage to an aircraft.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 13 Aug 2011

Updated:

Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.