

382nd AIR SERVICE GROUP

MISSION

LINEAGE

382nd Air Service Group activated, 24 Jun 1944

STATIONS

Stinson Fld, San Antonio, TX

Chittagong, India

Liuchow, China

Kiangwan (Shanghai Air Depot)

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Several Officers and enlisted men (EM) with different occupational specialties were transferred by the Air Service Command (ASC) to Stinson Field, San Antonio, Texas in the spring of 1944 to be

trained in four separate Cadres. Each Cadre was later to become the nucleus of four streamlined Air Service Groups (ASG), each of which had 650 persons instead of the usual 1400. Four ASG's were activated on June 24, 1944 with Cadre No. 7 composed of 28 Officers and 57 E M becoming the nucleus of the 382nd ASG. This Group was composed of three squadrons: Headquarters and Base Service Squadron (Hq. Sqdn.), 598th Air Engineering Squadron (598th AES) and 606th Air Materiel Squadron (606th AMS). Commanding Officer of the 382nd ASG was Lt. Col. Edward W. Thomson. Authorized strength of the Group was 40 Officers and 633 EM and it attained full strength by September 1, 1944. The mission of the Group was to provide third echelon maintenance, supply and station complement services for overseas AAF units. The 598th AES personnel were assigned to five Mobile Repair Units and fifteen Fixed Shops.

The Group was considered fully trained by September 25, 1944 and after packing of squadron supplies was sent by rail from Stinson Field to Venice Army Air Base (AAB), Florida. The 1260 mile trip commenced on October 9th and was completed on October 12, 1944. A hurricane struck the camp on October 19th and for safety reasons the men were housed in a high school gym at Sarasota, Florida. The storm partially destroyed about half of the hutments used as housing by the 382nd ASG at Venice AAB. The Group was inspected and declared fit for overseas duty on October 25, 1944. Final training and packing were completed, and the Group departed Venice, Florida by troop train on December 2nd and arrived at an Embarkation Center at Camp Anza, Arlington, California on December 7, 1944. The Group received their final medical shots and clothing issue and departed Camp Anza by rail for a short trip to the Los Angeles Harbor, Wilmington, California, on December 18, 1944. The 382nd ASG boarded the USS General William Mitchell on the same day.

The ship left the harbor two days later and steamed southwesterly, crossing the equator on December 29, 1944 and arrived at Hobart, Tasmania on Saturday, January 6, 1945. After all received passes to visit the city of Hobart, the USS Mitchell formed up with sister ship USS George M. Randall and New Zealand troop ship Empress of Scotland on January 9th to form a convoy protected by the light cruiser Achilles and two destroyers. The convoy steamed westerly along the south coast of Australia, opposite Perth on January 14th. Here the escorting ships were replaced with a single heavy cruiser and the convoy steamed northwesterly. On the morning of January 20th, the heavy cruiser was replaced by three small destroyers and in the afternoon the Empress of Scotland and one destroyer left the convoy bound for the Suez Canal and Europe. The two transport ships and two destroyers continued their northwesterly course crossing the equator at 0700 hours on January 21, 1945. Safe waters allowed the passengers to be topside on deck in the evening hours of January 22nd, the first time since the ship left Hobart. The USS Mitchell arrived at the Port of Bombay, India late in the day of January 23, 1945.

The troops debarked ship just before noon on Wednesday, January 24th and boarded two special trains which left Bombay at 2300 hours on January 24, 1945. The trains crossed India in five days and arrived at Chittagong, India in the early morning hours of January 29, 1945. The troops moved to temporary quarters in tents at British Rest Camp E and six days later moved to permanent quarters in bashas at Chittagong AAB on February 4, 1945.

While enroute by train from Bombay, the ASG changed the plans of having the 382nd ASG assist the 54th ASG, headquartered at Tezgaon, India and assigned two separate areas of responsibility to the two Groups. The 382nd ASG assumed control of the Arakan Area south of 22°45' North Latitude and the 54th ASG serviced the East Bengal Area north of 22° 45'. For administrative purposes, the 382nd ASG continued to be attached to the 54th ASG until General Order No. 32 was issued on March 30, 1945 by Headquarters ASC, India-Burma Theater.

The Arakan Area of responsibility of the 382nd ASG was too much to handle alone, an acute manpower shortage developed, and several units were attached to the 382nd ASG to increase the effective manpower by nearly 600 persons. The attached units were the 505th and 420th Air Service Squadrons (ASS) and 2124th and 2261st Quartermaster Truck Companies. Together the 382nd ASG and attached units provided maintenance for 100's of airplanes and motor vehicles and provided the necessary supplies and services to sustain the personnel of the various units. In March 1945 two Mobile Units under T/Sgt's Butt and Whittington were on detached service in Sinthe, Burma between Chittagong and Mandalay.

Rangoon, Burma was captured by the British 14th Army in early May 1945 and the Japanese were retreating out of Burma. The war had moved too far away for Chittagong and Cox's Bazar to be effective and plans were made to withdraw the 382nd ASG to Piardoba, India, 60 miles west northwest of Calcutta, for rest and resupply. A tragic air crash at Mingaladon, Burma on May 29, 1945 took the lives of the CO of the 382nd ASG, Col. Edward W. Thomson and three members of the 598th AES, 1st Lt. James V. Poynter, Sgt. Harold W. Longley and Cpl. Maxey N. Kirby.

Advance parties totaling two Officers and 34 EM were airlifted to Piardoba on June 19th and 20th, 1945. An incoming message from Kunming, China dated June 22, 1945 to the Commanding General of the AAF, India-Burma Theater requested that an ASG be sent to China as soon as possible. The unassigned 382nd ASG was selected and movement priorities were immediately accelerated and the ultimate destination changed from Piardoba to Liuchow, China. Instead of traveling by rail the Group was airlifted from Chittagong to Piardoba between June 27th and 30th, 1945. The Group was officially established at Piardoba at 1300 hours on June 30th. A small contingent remained at Chittagong to drive the vehicles and accompany the rail shipment of equipment at a later date.

The Group was subdivided into four echelons for its trip to China. The ADVANCE PARTY composed of six Officers and 100 EM was airlifted over the hump in C-54's from Piardoba to Luliang, 60 miles east of Kunming, on July 12, 1945 and later flown to Liuchow. The MAIN PARTY composed of 26 Officers and 265 EM was moved by rail from Piardoba to Chabua, India during the July 17th to 21st period, airlifted to Luliang on July 25th, and later flown to Liuchow. The REAR ECHELON at Chittagong, composed of seven Officers and 79 EM, was split into three elements. Two motor convoys which departed Chittagong on July 24th and 25th and arrived at Chabua on the 29th and 30th, consisted of a total of 55 trucks pulling 47 trailers, all filled with organizational equipment. An all rail shipment of undriveable vehicles and unwieldy equipment left Chittagong on July 25th and arrived at Chabua on July 29, 1945. In addition, the Rear Echelon selected the unwanted equipment belonging to the 382nd ASG which was returned to the Air Depot near Calcutta on two

trains that departed Chittagong on July 29th and 31st. The BURMA ROAD PARTY composed of three Officers and 187 E M was shipped on two trains from Piardoba to Chabua which departed on the 26th and 27th of July 1945. The Burma Road Party and Rear Echelon were merged in Chabua to provide sufficient personnel to drive the large (160 vehicle) convoy across the Ledo-Burma Road. Additional vehicles were provided to bring the convoy up to full strength at Chabua. The convoy was given Road Clearance # 19 - SOS to depart on July 30, 1945 but was delayed in Ledo as it did not arrive in Kunming, China until September 1, 1945. The trip normally takes about two weeks. Perhaps a late delivery of vehicles or the cessation of hostilities in mid-August contributed to this delay. A total of 42 Officers and 631 EM plus 150 tons of equipment were moved from India to China.

The 382nd ASG was briefly assigned to the 14th Air Force Service Command for one week from July 25th to August 1, 1945 when the area of responsibility of the 10th Air Force was expanded to include China south of the Yangtze River and the Group was reassigned to the 10th AF. The 382nd ASG provided maintenance for the 75th Fighter Squadron and one Combat Cargo Squadron plus transient cargo and fighter aircraft at Liuchow. Detachments provided aircraft maintenance, service and supply at Nanning, Loping and Pakhoi until mid-October. Operations were ended at Liuchow in early October and the Group was flown to Kiangwan AAB at Shanghai, China on October 8th and 9th, 1945.

The Group established and operated the Shanghai Air Depot (SHAD) until November 12, 1945 when the 14th Air Depot Group took over. The 606th AMS was assigned to the Woosung and Jukong Docks where they performed the supply function for SHAD. The Hq. Sqdn. operated the Air Depot providing administrative, transportation, utility and medical services. The 598th AES assisted the 381st ASG in performing Base engineering functions at Kiangwan AAB. Two detachments were servicing aircraft and furnishing supplies at Peiping, China.

By the end of November about 40% of the 382nd ASG had been rotated home and the remaining Group strength was 28 Officers and 392 EM. On December 6th the "low-point" men not eligible for rotation were transferred into the surviving 381st ASG. The 382nd ASG was declared surplus on December 15, 1945 and all personnel became eligible for a trip to Good Old USA.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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