

439 AIRLIFT WING



MISSION

The 439 Airlift Wing provides worldwide air movement of troops, supplies, equipment and medical patients. Support units provide communications, engineering, logistical, medical and security requirements. The peacetime mission includes recruiting, training and supervision of personnel to assure mission readiness.

LINEAGE

439 Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, established, 19 May 1949
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active service, 1 Apr 1951
Inactivated, 3 Apr 1951
Redesignated 439 Fighter-Bomber Wing, 26 May 1952
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957
Redesignated 439 Tactical Airlift Wing, 14 Mar 1974
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Apr 1974
Redesignated 439 Military Airlift Wing, 1 Oct 1987
Redesignated 439 Airlift Wing, 1 Feb 1992

STATIONS

Selfridge AFB, MI, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951
Selfridge AFB, MI, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957
Westover AFB (later, ARB), MA, 1 Apr 1974

ASSIGNMENTS

Tenth Air Force, 27 Jun 1949-3 Apr 1951
Tenth Air Force, 15 Jun 1952-16 Nov 1957

Eastern Air Force Reserve Region, 1 Apr 1974
Fourteenth Air Force, 8 Oct 1976
Twenty-Second Air Force, 1 Jul 1993

WEAPON SYSTEMS

T-6, 1949-1950
T-7, 1949-1951
T-11, 1949-1951
TC-46, 1949-1951
T-6, 1952-1954
C-46, 1952-1955
T-28, 1953-1955
F-51, 1953-1954
T-33, 1953-1957
F-80, 1953-1956
F-84, 1956-1957
F-86, 1957
TC-47, 1957
C-119, 1957
C-123, 1974-1982
C-130, 1974-1988
C-5, 1987

COMMANDERS

Col Lloyd E. Arnold, 27 Jun 1949
Col George R. Weinbrenner, c. Dec 1950
Col Kenneth R. Strauss, c. 20 Jan 1951
Col George R. Weinbrenner, 12 Mar-3 Apr 1951
BG Felix L. Vidal, 15 Jun 1952
LTC Richard M. Thornburn, 1 Mar 1955
Col James H. McPartlin, c. 25 Dec 1956-16 Nov 1957
Col James W. Kehoe, 1 Apr 1974
Col Ronald C. Dunn, 30 Jun 1974
BG Billy M. Knowles, 5 Sep 1974
BG Donal E. Haugen, 15 Jun 1978
Col Louis Paskevicz, 31 Aug 1983
BG Jack P. Ferguson, 1 Apr 1984
BG Frederick D. Walker, 1 May 1986
Col James P. Czekanski, 11 Mar 1992
BG James D. Bankers, 11 May 1997
Brig Gen Martin M. Mazick, 7 Mar 1999
Brig Gen Wallace W. Farris, Jr, 9 Aug 2003
Col Robert R. Swain, Jr.
Col Steven Vautrain, 7 Aug 2011

Brig Gen Albert V. Lupenski, 7 Sep 2014
Brig Gen Jay D. Jensen, 1 Mar 2016
Brig Gen Derin S. Durham, Jun 2017
Col Craig C. Peters, 6 Apr 2019

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards
1 Jan 1975-31 Dec 1976
15 Jun 1989-15 Jun 1991

Bestowed Honors

Authorized to display honors earned by the 439 Operations Group prior to 19 May 1949

Service Streamers

World War II American Theater

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Rome-Arno
Southern France
Normandy
Northern France
Rhineland
Ardennes-Alsace
Central Europe

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation
France, 6-7 Jun 1944

French Croix de Guerre with Palm
6-7 Jun 1944
15 Aug 1944

French Fourragere

EMBLEM

Azure, between in chief a pair of wings conjoined in leure and in base three billets Or, a chevron Gules, fimbriated Argent, all within a diminished bordure of the second. Attached below the shield, a White scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "439 AIRLIFT WING" in Blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The wings represent the unit's mission to provide command and staff supervision of all the tactical airlift squadrons. The chevron represents support, in reference to tactical airlift support for personnel, equipment and supplies, represented by the three rectangular symbols in base. (Approved, 13 May 1974)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Under supervision of the 2242nd Air Force Reserve Training Center, trained as a troop carrier organization, 1949-1951 and for fighter-bomber missions, 1952-1957.

Replaced 901st and 905th Tactical Airlift Groups at Westover AFB in Apr 1974 and assumed tactical airlift, special operations, satellite support, and aeromedical evacuation missions. Took part in tactical exercises, global airlift, and humanitarian missions.

Gained two tactical groups and the responsibility for operating the military portion of Niagara Falls Intl Aprt on 25 Jan 1976 and Pittsburgh Intl Airport on 1 Oct 1980, but relinquished control of those groups in 1992.

During the 1980s, took part in various training exercises involving tactical airlift and rotated personnel and aircraft to Panama. Provided airlift support for the movement and training of other units and conducted local proficiency flying training missions. At the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war in 1989, the wing transported UN ceasefire observers to the Persian Gulf area.

Airlifted troops and equipment to Panama during the incursion into Panama at the end of the year. Airlifted troops, equipment, and supplies to support global contingency, humanitarian, and anti-drug operations during the 1990s. Airlifts included troops and cargo to Europe and Persian Gulf area before and during the Southwest Asia War and Patriot missiles to Israel in 1991.

In 1988, a wing C-5A airlifted Canadian soldiers and equipment to Turkey, from where they deployed to the Iran-Iraq border as United Nations peacekeeping forces. A Galaxy from Westover also transported firefighters and equipment for battling fires in Yellowstone National Park in September 1988.

The 439 flew several relief missions to Jamaica after Hurricane Gilbert devastated that island nation in the fall of 1988.

In 1989, the Patriot Wing again flew humanitarian missions to St. Croix, Puerto Rico, and Charleston, S.C., in the wake of Hurricane Hugo.

Within 24 hours of the initiation of Operation Just Cause, the 439 was pressed into service flying a total of eight missions into Panama in support of the national effort there in 1989.

When Saddam Hussein ordered Iraqi troops to invade the neighboring country of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, C-5A aircrews from Westover immediately volunteered to rush troops and supplies to the region. On Aug. 22, the 337th

Military Airlift Squadron was officially activated and proceeded to fly hundreds of missions in support of Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

Following Desert Storm, the Patriot Wing remained busy flying relief missions for Operation Provide Comfort.

In 1992 aircraft from the 439 were used to fly food, medical supplies and clothing to the new Commonwealth of Independent States in the former Soviet Union.

In August 1992, Westover C-5s ferried supplies, vehicles and personnel to Homestead AFB, Fla., to assist in the relief efforts following Hurricane Andrew.

Westover crews also came to the aid of civil war plagued Croatia when they brought humanitarian supplies there the late fall of 1992. They also assisted Pakistani citizens when floodwaters tore throughout the Southwest Asian nation.

On December 6, 1992, an eight-member C-5 crew from Westover left Westover to play roles in Operation Restore Hope, a United Nations effort in Somalia. The crew became part of the stage operation flying relief missions into the war-torn nation. Another 337th crew joined the stage on Dec. 29, 1992.

In late March of 1993, Westover aircrews began flying relief missions from Cairo, Egypt into Mogadishu, Somalia. In April, 74th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron medics flew there to provide medical assistance.

In October 1993 tension in Somalia heightened and the U.S. sent more troops and equipment to Mogadishu. Westover sent three aircraft and three crews, for a total of six missions, to respond to the crisis in Somalia.

During the civil war in Yugoslavia, a Patriot Wing aircrew delivered 260 tons of food to Croatia in April 1994 to keep the UN lifeline flowing to the besieged Bosnian city of Sarajevo.

As they had in Somalia, Westover reservists responded to the call for help from Rwandan famine and civil war victims during Operation Support Hope. In the summer and fall of 1994, they flew many missions to aid the effort in Rwanda, as well as missions to support Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, and Operation Southern Watch in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the nation's effort to deter Iraqi aggression on the Arabian Peninsula.

In April 1995, a Westover C-5 aircrew delivered 24 tons of medicines, prosthetics, stretchers and other medical materials to Zagreb, Croatia during a period when the city was subject to rocket attacks. On July 9, 1995, a 439 Airlift Wing crew airlifted United Nation Rapid Reaction Force troops, vehicles and cargo from RAF Brize-Norton to Croatia.

Westover personnel supported Operation Joint Endeavor, the UN effort in Bosnia, through the end of 1995 and into 1996. In March, 1996, medics from the 439 Medical Squadron deployed to Honduras to provide much-needed medical care for the poverty-stricken villagers. Throughout 1996, Westover crews continued operational and humanitarian missions all over the world.

In November 1997, Westover's 337th Airlift Squadron launched three missions in support of Operation Phoenix Scorpion, the U.S. buildup of forces in the Persian Gulf area.

In November 1998, Westover's 337th Airlift Squadron launched eight missions in support of the nation's military buildup in the Persian Gulf.

On November 20, 1998, a C-5 humanitarian mission left Westover headed for Honduras with 175 tons of donated food, water and medicine collected by Rotary International and the Central American Emergency Relief organization.

In December 1998, seven missions were launched by the 337th Airlift Squadron to ferry supplies to the Persian Gulf in response to Operation Desert Fox.

Between April 16 and May 16, 1999, Westover C-5 aircrews from the 337th Airlift Squadron completed five missions in support of Operation Allied Force—the air war in Kosovo—to various sites in Europe.

Members of the 439 Airlift Wing participated in Aerospace Expeditionary Force missions during the final quarter of 1999. In October, 15 reservists deployed to Southwest Asia while five more went to sites in Europe. In November, 11 went to Southwest Asia and three to Europe while in December 13 were dispatched to Southwest Asia.

The dawn of the new millennium kept Westover's aircrews busy flying all over the globe. In February 2000, a 439 AW C-5A airlifted radomes for Ballistic Missile Testing in Hawaii. The following month, a 337 AS aircrew, on a routine mission to Germany, diverted to Accra, Ghana,

in support for Operation Atlas Response. The aircrew airlifted 64 tons of cargo and 68 members of the 86th Contingency Report Force from Ramstein AB, Germany. The cargo included equipment to help people in Mozambique recover from severe flooding. Westover crews flew redeployment missions during the remainder of the month from Africa as well.

Thirty-seven members of the 439 AW participated in the Air Mobility Command Rodeo in May at Pope AFB, NC. The wing's maintenance team took first place for best C-5 pre-flight inspection.

In June 2000, a Westover C-5 provided Missile Defense System support by carrying a 65-foot submarine, designated the Advanced SEAL Delivery System, from Andrews AFB, Md., to Hawaii. The sub weighed 55 tons. It was the first time the sub had been carried by air transportation.

In September 2001, a Westover C-5A aircrew that originally flew a routine mission to Travis AFB, CA, found itself heading suddenly eastward with emergency supplies following the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, DC. The C-5 aircrew was on the first leg of a mission to Australia when it was tasked to transport a rescue team and equipment to New York City. The aircrew delivered about 72 members of an urban search and rescue team, their vehicles and nine pallets of equipment to McGuire AFB, N.J., early on Sept. 11. The team included medical people, firefighters, chaplains, and rescue dogs.

The Air Force recognized the 439 AW for its hard work in January, 2002, when the wing earned its third Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The award honored the wing's accomplishments from Oct. 1, 1999, to Sept. 30, 2001.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.