

## 442 OPERATIONS GROUP



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

442 Troop Carrier Group established, 25 May 1943

Activated, 1 Sep 1943

Inactivated, 30 Sep 1946

Redesignated 442 Troop Carrier Group, Medium, 10 May 1949

Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949

Ordered to Active Service, 10 Mar 1951

Inactivated, 12 Mar 1951

Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952

Inactivated, 14 Apr 1959

Redesignated 442 Tactical Fighter Group, 28 Dec 1981

Activated in the Reserve, 1 Oct 1982

Inactivated, 1 Feb 1984

Redesignated 442 Operations Group and activated in the Reserve, 1 Aug 1992

### STATIONS

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 1 Sep 1943

Alliance AAFld, NE, 16 Dec 1943

Pope Field, NC, 26 Jan 1944

Baer Field, IN, 2-11 Mar 1944

Fulbeck, England, c. 29 Mar 1944

Weston Zoyland, England, 12 Jun 1944

Peray (Bonnetable), France, 5 Oct 1944

St Andre-de-L'Eure, France, 7 Nov 1944  
Munich-Reim (later, USAF Sta, Munich/Reim; USAF Sta, Munich; Munich AAB), Germany, 4  
Oct 1945-30 Sep 1946  
Fairfax Field, KS, 27 Jun 1949  
Olathe NAS, KS, 27 May 1950-12 Mar 1951  
Olathe NAS, KS, 15 Jun 1952  
Grandview (later, Richards-Gebaur) AFB, MO, 3 Apr 1955-14 Apr 1959  
Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO, 1 Oct 1982-1 Feb 1984  
Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO, 1 Aug 1992  
Whiteman AFB, MO, 1 Apr 1994

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

61 Troop Carrier Wing, 1 Sep 1943  
I Troop Carrier Command, 17 Dec 1943  
60 Troop Carrier Wing, 26 Jan 1944  
Ninth Air Force, c. 29 Mar 1944  
IX Troop Carrier Command, 31 Mar 1944  
50 Troop Carrier Wing, Apr 1944  
IX Air Force Service Command, 20 May 1945  
302 Transport Wing, 11 Aug 1945  
51 Troop Carrier Wing (known in ETO as European Air Transport Service [Provisional]), 1 Oct  
1945-30 Sep 1946  
442 Troop Carrier Wing, 27 Jun 1949-12 Mar 1951  
442 Troop Carrier Wing, 15 Jun 1952-14 Apr 1959  
434 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Oct 1982-1 Feb 1984  
442 Fighter Wing, 1 Aug 1992

### **ATTACHMENTS**

52 Troop Carrier Wing, 12 May-6 Jun 1944 and 1-11 Sep 1944  
53 Troop Carrier Wing, 11-26 Sep 1944  
Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces, 20 May-10 Aug 1945

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-47, 1943-1946  
C-53, 1943, 1944, 1945  
CG-4 (glider), 1944-1945  
C-109, 1945  
L-4, 1945  
L-3, 1945  
CG-15 (glider), 1945  
T-6, 1949-1950  
T-7, 1949-1951  
T-11, 1949-1951  
C-47, 1949-1950

C/TC-46, 1949, 1950-1951  
C-46, 1952-1957  
C-119, 1957-1959  
A-10, 1982-1984  
A-10, 1992

### **COMMANDERS**

Col Charles M. Smith, 1 Sep 1943  
Col John C. Kilborn, 25 Sep 1945  
Lt Col Paul A. Jones, 4 Oct 1945  
Lt Col Bertram C. Harrison, Jun-30 Sep 1946  
Col Lyman H. Goff Jr., 27 Jun 1949-30 Sep 1950 (permanent) and 1 Oct 1950-12 Mar 1951  
(additional duty)  
Unkn, 15 Jun 1952-1954  
Col Virgil A. Dinneen, by Dec 1954-unkn  
Lt Col Robert A. McIntosh, 1 Oct 1982-1 Feb 1984  
Lt Col Charles E. Stenner Jr., 1 Aug 1992  
Lt Col Roger G. Disrud, 15 Nov 1992  
Lt Col George D. Burgess, 4 Mar 1999  
Lt Col Jeffrey L. Waller, 18 Aug 1999  
Col Phillip D. Poland, 8 Aug 2000  
Col Tony Johnson

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

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

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation  
France, [6-7] Jun 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award  
1 Oct 1997-31 Aug 1999  
1 Mar 2003-28 Feb 2005  
1 Mar 2005-28 Feb 2007

## **EMBLEM**

Group will use the Wing emblem with the Group designation in the scroll.

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 442nd TCG came into existence - on paper at least on Sept. 1, 1943, at Sedalia Army Air Field. In reality, the unit had only a handful of men and no aircraft. Most of the leadership was in Florida preparing to depart for Missouri. More men, aircraft, gliders and machinery were to follow during the next six months and four stateside duty stations. The forming unit picked up some Piper Cub trainer aircraft and a few C-47s while at Sedalia, and much needed training commenced, as the unit only had a half dozen or so pilots with combat experience. The green 442nd pilots lacked experience, but not bravado. "Somewhere over Lake of the Ozarks, (the pilots) would try to ripple the water from an extremely low pass," said Seymour Shapiro, who as a captain served as an engineering officer in charge of 120 mechanics who kept the planes of the 304th squadron operational.

Jack Leder, 305th TCS crew chief, agreed. "Some of them were really feeling their oats," he said of the Sedalia training. "We had one C-47 land with the tips of one of the propellers bent back and corn stalks in the engine cowling." Around mid-December, the Group moved to an airfield near Alliance, Nebraska. But that stay proved short-lived about six bitter-cold weeks. Hayhoe remembered one significant event from Alliance, however. "The old man (305th commander, Lt. Col. John Crandell) made (pilots) solo a glider once each so we would know what it was like," he said. "I still haven't forgotten; I can assure you." Obviously Crandell wanted his C-47 pilots to appreciate some of the "cargo" they were hauling.

The Waco glider planes Hayhoe referred to were light - almost flimsy - unmotored aircraft designed to land troops and gear into combat after being towed by C-47s. "Flying" them was not for the faint of heart. Many glider pilots lost their lives in World War II, including in the 442nd. In fact, the 442nd's first casualty was a glider pilot - J.C. Flaherty — who was killed in a February 1944 crash at the unit's third location. Pope Field, N.C. 442nd commander Col. Charles Smith's demeanor also had an impact on the C-47 pilots. "He was cool, calm and collected," said 306th squadron pilot John Farley of Smith, who survived the war and only died a couple of years ago. "He wanted us to get a feel for what (the glider crews) would go through." "Smitty was very calm," remembered navigator Bill Silbeikleit. who knew Smith well and often him "I hex sax he had a temper, but I nexersaw Inin get excited."

Byallac-counts, the glider and night drop training at Pope Field was difficult and hazard-442nd commander Col. Charles Smith's demeanor also had an impact on the C-47 pilots. "He was cool, calm and collected," said 306th squadron pilot John Farley of Smith, who survived the war and only died a couple of years ago. "He wanted us to get a feel for what (the glider crews) would ous. Several 442nd pilots recounted a training incident in which 303rd pilot Robert Carr told an audience

in a 2000 speech at the National Guard Air Museum at Ft. Snelling, Minn. "The (paratroopers) had orders to wear their lifejackets because we were going near water.

"Some of them ignored the order and paid with their lives." Although not faulted in the incident, several 442nd pilots said the tragedy deeply affected Smith, who was the lead pilot on the training run. The Group, now at full strength with more than 1,000 personnel, departed Pope Field for a 3-week stint at Baer Field near Ft. Wayne, Ind. At Baer, the unit swapped out equipment and was fully outfitted for the long-awaited deployment to England to prepare for the inevitable invasion of Europe. The aircrews would fly to England via a "southern" route through South America and across to North Africa.

The route was necessitated by traditionally poor late-winter weather in the North Atlantic. The ground personnel and glider crews would board the famous Queen Mary for a New York to Scotland run. -Translation "This is the day I have waited for so long, ever since Dec. 7, 1941," wrote 303rd glider pilot Jim Clark in his diary on March 20, 1944, the day they left on the Queen Mary. "The men who created this most incredible ship are certainly masters, as are several paratroopers from Ft. Benning drowned in a lake in a night drop. "This wasn't all sweetness and light he men who crew her, I hope.... I am awfully tired to night." Tired though he was, Clark knew the real struggle was coming soon. "The European invasion will come between April 20 and June 20," he wrote, "and will be such a might force that it will crush the defenders on the Atlantic Wall."

March '44 Crossing the 'pond' Weather and German U-boats kept both groups of 442nd travelers from taking the direct route to England. The majority of the troops traveled in the Queen Mary, a magnificent boat that carried in excess of 15,000 people per trip. To avoid detection, the Queen Mary's crew sailed in a zig-zag pattern at the swiftest possible speeds. "We had (thousands) of troops on board and no escort ships," said Ralph Mulally, a glider mechanic for the 305th. "I went topside once when we all of sudden stopped zigzagging. We were passing through a convoy of ships. When we reached the other side of the convoy, we went right back to zigzagging again."

Other than occasional seasickness from the stormy North Atlantic, the Queen Mary's eight-day trip to Scotland was uneventful. One day by train, and the 442nd's ground personnel and glider pilots reached their destination, Fulbeck, some 75 miles northeast of London. The aircrews flying the group's C-47s were not so fortunate. After stops in Florida and Puerto Rico, the convoy of aircraft headed to Brazil, then turned east toward Ascension Island in the Atlantic. From there, the convoy continued onto Liberia on the Gold Coast of Africa. Disaster struck shortly afterward on a flight from Liberia to Dakar, French West Africa. "We left... Liberia and flew back over the ocean," wrote. C.D. Turbeville, a member of the 305th squadron, a few months before he died last March. "We were cruising along fine when we lost an engine. It just quit, so we started throwing out of the aircraft everything that wasn't bolted down."

Fortunately, an Australian airstrip was nearby at Bathurst, Gambia. Construction on the airstrip wasn't complete, however. "The (runway) overrun had been cleared of trees," Turbeville wrote, "but the stumps remained about three feet tall." When the pilot realized, he was going to hit the stumps, he tried to pull out and take off with one engine. The plane went up about 300 feet, then

lurched down and crashed to the ground. "I asked our navigator ... where would be the safest place to be in case we did crash," Turbeville said. "He had said on either side of the latrine door in the very back of the aircraft, so that was where I was seated. And that is why I am still here today."

Turbeville was thrown from the plane and broke his leg. Five of the eight people on board the plane died. One, Cpl. Lester Zornes of the 306th squadron, remains buried in North Africa at an American military cemetery. Of the 33 members of the 442nd buried in foreign-soil American military cemeteries, Zornes is the only one from the 306th. Eventually, the rest of the 50-plus aircraft made it to Fulbeck. Turbeville, who convalesced in Morocco for more than two weeks, finally caught up with his mates in mid-April. "When I finally located my tent, all my belongings that had come over by ship were spread out on my bed," he recalled. "When I inquired why this was, I was told by my mates that they all had heard I was dead. "That was some welcome to jolly old England." March '44 to June 4 '44 England and countdown to destiny After the 442nd arrived in England training diversified. Everyone in the group knew what was coming and had a decent idea of when.

"In addition to (normal) low level and formation flying, we worked on mass takeoff and landing procedures," Carr said. "We achieved an average takeoff interval of five seconds per plane and an average landing interval of 20 seconds per plane." The idea behind the close intervals was to keep dropped paratroopers from getting scattered. In late May, the group participated in a night drop of paratroopers - a simulation of what was to come. "As before," Carr said, "troops (drowned) in this action because they refused to wear life vests as ordered." All the ultra-close formation and night drop training made it apparent that gliders were not going to be a part of the 442nd's D-Day activity. "It does not look as if our gliders are going to be used in the first assault and we are disappointed," Clark wrote on June 4, 1944, adding a day later, "We are hoping that our gliders will be used for reinforcements but it's the generals who make these decisions." Finally, just after the first of June, the invasion so long awaited was obviously imminent to the 442nd's members. Briefings were serious, even sobering. "We were ordered not to bring (any paratroopers) back," Hayhoe remembered. "We were ordered to shoot them if they didn't jump out. "Fortunately, it didn't come to that." In fact, to a man, surviving members of the 442nd remember the paratroopers as extremely brave young men. "The bravest," said Dave Walling, who himself was trained as a "pathfinder," and had jump training. "You had to admire their courage."

The invasion was scheduled for June 5, but weather knocked it back a day. Late on the 5th, members of the Army's 507th Parachute Regiment began loading the aircraft. "What was amazing to me was how loaded down with gear these guys were." Silberkleit said. "With gear, each one of them must have weighed more than 300 pounds." So loaded down, in fact, that they had to be pushed into the plane and helped to their seats. The paratroopers had been living in hangars for more than a week, awaiting this moment. Apprehension had been replaced by eagerness in that time. Many of them were relaxed, though ready for the task at hand and understanding its magnitude.

"There was this big kid with a baby face who loaded on our plane," recalled Ivan Harvey, a radio operator with the 305th. "He was exchanging some good-natured banter with (crewmembers)."

Harvey didn't remember the banter, but he remembered the last thing he heard the young paratrooper say. "He looked at my pilot and said, 'Well Captain, if we live through this night, we'll live forever.'" Harvey didn't catch his name. And he never saw him again. Forty-five planes from the 442nd - or about 5 percent of the Allied aircraft used for D-Day - lifted off from Fulbeck just after 11 p.m. on the 5th. After heading out into the Atlantic, the planes turned and paralleled the Normandy coastline. The 442nd's mission was to drop its paratroopers in the vicinity of St. Mere Eglise. St. Mere Eglise is the famed village from the book and movie "The Longest Day", where one paratrooper his parachute stuck on the town's church steeple - played dead and survived while the Germans defended the town below. Dropping paratroopers in the dead of night in blackout flying conditions with perhaps the aid of primitive beacons set by pathfinders - was as difficult as it sounds. Navigator Dave Walling wanted to know if his crew would succeed, so he gave two paratroopers self-addressed stamped envelopes so they could report back later. Pilot Norm Statham also checked on the paratroopers before they were to drop. "I was greatly surprised to see that some of them were sleeping," he wrote in 1995. "They were certainly among the bravest people that I have ever seen." The 442nd was well back in the line of drops that night, and the Germans were aware something was up by the time the unit's planes reached land. Only 11 of the 45 aircraft came through the evening unscathed.

Thirty-one aircraft sustained battle damage and another three were lost. One crew was forced to hide in occupied territory for a day until "liberated" by advancing G.I.s. But much like 442nd's tough A-10 Thunderbolt II of today, the veterans marveled at the durability of the C-47. "It was the most unbelievable airplane you ever saw," Silberkleit said. "It could take any kind of abuse and you could still fly it." Six 442nd members died that night, three of those were never found. They are listed on the Wall of the Missing at the American military cemetery at Colleville Sur Mer, which overlooks Omaha Beach. One of the others, 1st Lt. Samuel Williams Jr., is buried there. The remaining 42 aircraft returned at 5:30 a.m.; but it was hardly over. On the afternoon of the invasion, June 6, the 442nd flew a resupply mission, and flew another on the 7th. On June 8, 442nd planes landed near Cherbourg to deliver the resupply on ground that the Germans had controlled just 48 hours before.

By June 10, the 442nd had orders to move to Weston Zoyland in the southwest of England, not far from the site of the Membury crash. Weston Zoyland was much closer to France than Fulbeck, easing resupply flights. As for the 442nd's drops ... while some paratroopers dropped from other units ended up as much as 30 miles off target, the 442nd's drops were among the most successful of the invasion. Walling's two paratroopers both sent the postcards back indicating they were within 400 yards of their drop target. Only one of their 16 paratroopers was injured on the night drop, despite a fog that greatly limited their ability to gauge their landing on the ground. "To you and your plane crew ... thanks a million for a swell jump," wrote Cpl. Gilbert McKnight to Walling. "Really and truly it was the easiest and best jump I've made in a long time."

A first sergeant from the 507 Parachute Infantry Regiment also wrote Walling. "Some of our guys actually landed on the (drop zone)," the man wrote. "What more could we ask?" The 442nd earned a Presidential Unit Citation for its efforts between June 5-7. During the next two months, the unit proved its mettle several times in drop operations in the invasion of southern France and various resupply missions. September '44 Operation Market-Garden It was the largest airborne operation

in history. Paratroopers, Gliders, the works. And though it did not achieve its objectives of securing key bridges behind enemy lines and help end the war by Christmas, people still marvel at the scope of Market-Garden.

For the 442nd. it was its busiest flying in the war. And its most costly. In four days, the unit lost 23 men either killed or missing in action, as well as several aircraft. Jim Clark, who had missed combat when the 442nd's gliders were bypassed for D-Day, finally got his chance. After bringing his glider down near his designated spot in Holland, many of the glider pilots contacted each other and - essentially - hid in the woods. Clark and a buddy decided to sleep in a glider near the edge of the woods. He was told the challenge and password for the night was "Uncle Sam." "In the middle of the night I awoke, and I heard someone crawling just outside the glider," he wrote in his memoirs. "I decided that this was the kind of situation that called for the password so I said, 'Uncle,' and after what seemed a long time, but wasn't, the answer came back, 'Joe.'" A German patrol was just outside the fabric of the glider.

With light numbers and not knowing the situation, the patrol retreated. It was merely probing to try and determine where the enemy was and its strength in the area. Others weren't so lucky to avoid capture. C-47 co-pilot Paul Ducharme's crew was captured shortly after crash landing in Belgium. Eventually transferred to a P.O.W. camp in Germany, Ducharme lost half of his 200 pounds in the eight months as a captive before being freed by the Russians. The rest of the 442nd would soon be leaving England. "They were here and the next moment they were gone," remembered lifetime Weston Zoyland resident Bob Heard earlier this year. "It was quite interesting watching them take off, knowing that we'd never see the Americans again." By November 1944, the 442nd moved onto the continent and settled into resupply and wounded evacuation missions. They operated out of a former German airstrip near the small town of St. Andre de l'Eure, less than 50 miles west of Paris. Fifty-eight years later. St. Andre residents still have poignant memories of the 442nd.

"The Americans were our liberators," Bernard Dupuis said through an interpreter. "We will always be grateful." "You must understand, we had been under (German occupation) so long," said Pierre Berlin. "There is no describing the feeling of liberation." Some 442nd members even lived in town with families willing to host or rent out to them. And although the flying never let up. life took on a bit more normalcy. Most of the 442nd based from St. Andre until war's end. Near the end of war in April 1945, Clark flew a mission to Dachau, the soon-to-be infamous concentration camp. Clark's mission was to fly newly freed, starving Jews and other survivors to Belgium for medical assistance. "After more than 50 years," he wrote in his 1999 memoir, "I can still see those faces and wasted bodies."

On May 7, Germany surrendered unconditionally. Farley was outside the building when German Gen. Jodi signed in front of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. "We Hew some of the brass down to Rheims for it," he said. "It was quite a day." May '45 to Sept. '46 Occupation and home The 442nd continued on in Europe, moving postwar to an airfield in Munich. The unit flew more than 45,000 displaced people closer to their final destinations. Farley and others also were involved in flying some of the top surviving German High Command for the Nuremberg war trials, including Hermann



Goering, Doenitz and Rudolph Hess, among others. Those with the most time in service started heading back home, and before long the fresher faces of replacements mostly manned the 442nd. Fittingly enough, many of them sailed into New York on the Queen Mary. Clark, who would later serve as president of the Maryland State Senate, sailed in on Thanksgiving, 1945. Soon after, he was paid \$300 and honorably discharged at Ft. Meade, Md. "They tried to get me to enlist in the Reserve, but I told them, 'Thanks, but I have enough to last me awhile,'" he wrote.

The unit was inactivated on Sept. 30, 1946, at Munich. It would lay dormant for three years before reemerging, transforming from an Army Air Corps active duty unit into an Air Force Reserve unit. But the memories linger. "They gave me a plane and sent me to England," Hayhoe said. "They had more faith in me than I had in myself."

Trained in the Reserve as a troop carrier group, Jun 1949-Mar 1951.

Ordered to active service on 10 Mar 1951, the group inactivated two days later, its personnel being distributed to other USAF organizations.

Served as a Reserve troop carrier group again from Jun 1952 to Apr 1959.

Activated as an A-10 fighter group in Oct 1982. Trained for such missions as close air support, anti-armor operations, battlefield interdiction, and combat search and rescue.

On a recurring basis beginning in Dec 1993, deployed personnel and aircraft to Aviano AB, Italy, to participate in operations over Bosnia.

Deployed aircraft and personnel to Kuwait in support of Operation Southern Watch, Sep-Oct 1998.

Trained to maintain combat readiness for worldwide deployment of A-10 aircraft and aircrews, 2000.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE 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.