

## 463<sup>rd</sup> AIRLIFT GROUP



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

463<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium established, 1 Dec 1952  
Activated, 16 Jan 1953  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Assault, 1 Oct 1962  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, Medium, 15 May 1965  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 8 Dec 1965  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Aug 1967  
Inactivated, 31 Dec 1971  
Activated, 1 Jun 1972  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing, 1 Nov 1991  
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1993  
Redesignated 463<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Group, 31 Mar 1997  
Activated, 1 Apr 1997

### STATIONS

Memphis Muni Aprt, TN, 16 Jan 1953  
Ardmore AFB, OK, 1 Sep 1953  
Sewart AFB, TN, 15 Jan 1959  
Langley AFB, VA, 1 Jul 1963-22 Nov 1965  
Mactan Isle AFld, Philippines, 23 Nov 1965  
Clark AB, Philippines, 15 Jul 1968-31 Dec 1971  
Dyess AFB, TX, 1 Jun 1972-1 Oct 1993  
Little Rock AFB, AR, 1 Apr 1997

### ASSIGNMENTS

Eighteenth Air Force, 16 Jan 1953  
Ninth Air Force, 1 Sep 1957  
838<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 25 Sep 1957  
Ninth Air Force, 11 Dec 1957  
839<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 15 Jan 1959  
Ninth Air Force, 1 Jul 1963  
838<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 1 Oct 1963  
840<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 9 Nov 1964  
315<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 23 Nov 1965  
6<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 1 Nov 1968  
Thirteenth Air Force, 15 Dec 1969-31 Dec 1971  
834<sup>th</sup> Air Division, 1 Jun 1972  
Twenty-Second Air Force, 31 Dec 1974  
Fifteenth Air Force, 1 Jul-1 Oct 1993  
Twenty-First Air Force, 1 Apr 1997

#### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-46, 1953  
C-119, 1953-1957  
YC-122, 1954-1955  
C-122, 1955  
C-123, 1955-1956, 1956-1957  
C-130, 1956-1971  
C-118, 1968, 1970-1971  
C-124, 1970-1971  
C-7, 1972  
C-130, 1972-1993

#### **COMMANDERS**

Col George L. Holcomb, 16 Jan 1953  
BG Cecil H. Childre, 20 Aug 1954  
Col James L. Daniel Jr, 4 Jun 1957  
Col Luther O'Hern, 25 Sep 1957  
Col James L. Daniel Jr, 11 Dec 1957  
Col George G. Norman, 25 Jun 1958  
Col George G. Byrnes Jr, 18 Jun 1960  
Col Earl W. Worley, 22 Sep 1960  
Col George G. Byrnes Jr, 9 Jul 1962  
Col Ralph L. Reeve, 22 Aug 1962  
Col Arthur E. Aenchbacher, 17 Oct 1964  
Col Lopez J. Mantoux, 7 Nov 1966  
Col Thomas A. Twomey, 7 Dec 1967  
Col Marion F. Caruthers, 12 Apr 1968  
Col Charles S. Wolfe, 9 May 1969

Col John R. Geyer, 2 Jul 1970  
Col Stewart Young, 2 Sep-31 Dec 1971  
Col Richard T. Drury, 1 Jun 1972  
Col Robert F. Coverdale, 20 Jun 1972  
Col Bruce D. Ferrier, 2 Nov 1973  
Col Russell E. Mohny, 11 Feb 1975  
Col Sam B. Barrett, 13 Jan 1976  
Col Ivan D. Brown, 7 Mar 1977  
Col Robert B. Patterson, 22 Mar 1979  
Col Alexander K. Davidson, 25 Mar 1980  
Col John D. Butterfield, 21 Jun 1982  
Col Hanson L. Scott, 17 Jun 1985  
Col Frederic N. Buckingham, 18 Aug 1986  
Col Kenneth E. McAlear, 14 Apr 1988  
Col Albert R. Hart, 24 May 1988  
Col Robert A. Maguire Jr, 1 Nov 1989  
Col Terry L. Thompson, 16 Jul 1991  
Col John W. Brooks, 27 Aug 1992  
Col Bruce R. Sutherland, 6 Jun-1 Oct 1993  
LTC Douglas L. Miller, 1 Apr 1997  
Col David S. Gray, 23 Apr 1997  
Col Lance D. Christian, 21 Jul 1998  
Col Carl D. Evans, 19 Apr 2000  
Col Mark O. Schissler, 12 Oct 2001  
Col Scott P. Goodwin, 2 Jul 2003  
Col John J. Gomez, 8 Apr 2005

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

None

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Grenada 1983

Panama 1989-1990

### **Decorations**

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device

1 Jan 1967-31 May 1968

1 Jun 1968-30 Jun 1969

1 Jul 1970-31 May 1971

#### Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

15 Dec 1960-1 Apr 1961

1 Jul 1964-15 Jun 1966

1 May 1977-15 Jul 1978

16 Jul 1978-30 Jun 1979

1 Apr 1997-30 Jun 1998

1 Jul 2000-30 Jun 2001

1 Jul 2001-30 Jun 2002

1 Jul 2002-30 Jun 2003

1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004

1 Jul 2004-30 Jun 2005

#### Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jan 1967-31 Dec 1971

#### **Bestowed Honors**

Authorized to display honors earned by the 463<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group prior to 16 Jan 1953

#### **Service Streamers**

None

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Rome-Arno

Normandy

Northern France

Southern France

North Apennines

Rhineland

Central Europe

Po Valley

Air Combat, EAME Theater

#### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations

Ploesti, Rumania, 18 May 1944

Berlin, Germany, 24 Mar 1945

#### **EMBLEM**



Approved, 30 Aug 1954

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Airlifted and airdropped troops and cargo to support operations and exercises worldwide, 1953-1965, supporting deployments during the following crises: Lebanon (Jul 1958), Taiwan (Aug 1958), Berlin (Sep 1961), Cuba (Oct-Nov 1962), the Gulf of Tonkin (Aug-Dec 1964), Southeast Asia (Feb and Apr-Nov 1965), and the Dominican Republic (Apr-Sep 1965).

463rd Troop Carrier Wing was activated at Memphis Municipal Airport, Memphis, Tennessee in 1953 and equipped with C-119 "Flying Boxcar" transports. When the USAF installation at Memphis closed, the 463rd transferred to Ardmore AFB, Oklahoma. In 1955 the wing's 309th Troop Carrier Squadron became the first squadron in the US Air Force to operate the new Fairchild C-123 Provider.

The 463rd was also selected to be the first unit to equip with the new turboprop Lockheed C-130 Hercules. Several wing pilots and mechanics were chosen as "initial cadre" for the new airlifter. The first operational airplanes were delivered to the wing in December 1956. Shortly after the conversion, four pilots from the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron became The Four Horsemen, an aerial demonstration team that performed intricate maneuvers in the large transports. Ardmore was placed on the list of bases to be closed and the 463rd transferred to Sewart AFB, Tennessee where it joined the 314th Troop Carrier Wing, which had also converted to the C-130, and the two wings made up the 839th Air Division. The 839th supported Tactical Air Command and US Strike Command deployments throughout the world, including back-to-back deployments to Lebanon and Formosa in response to crisis situations on opposite sides of the world in the summer of 1958. Wing crews would be involved in numerous operations all over the world until the 463rd transferred to Pacific Air Forces to support the Vietnam War.

The 1960s saw an increase in Tactical Air Command troop carrier forces, which led to the conversion of the 463rd and 314th to the new C-130B while their A-models went to other units.

A further increase in troop carrier strength led to the transfer of the 463rd from Sewart to Langley AFB, Virginia in 1962. From Langley the 463rd supported United States requirements all over the world. Rising tension in Southeast Asia led to the deployment of 463rd squadrons to the Pacific, with TDY squadrons initially at Naha, Okinawa, then at Clark AB, Philippine Islands. When the United States began assigning C-130s for airlift duty in South Vietnam to support the buildup of troops in the rapidly escalating war, 463rd aircraft and crews on temporary duty in the Philippines began operations out of Saigon. In the spring of 1965 trouble in the Dominican Republic saw 463rd crews join other TAC and Military Air Transport Service C-130s in an airlift of the 82nd Airborne Division to San Isidro Airfield.

In late 1965 the Air Force decided to increase airlift strength in the Pacific and the 463rd transferred from TAC to PACAF along with other TAC C-130 units; the 463rd became part of the 315th Air Division, with its new headquarters located on Mactan Island in the Philippines, along with the 772nd and 774th Troop Carrier Squadrons, while the 773rd TCS operated from Clark Field on Luzon where it was joined by the 29th TCS, which transferred to PACAF from its base at Forbes AFB, Kansas. The 463rd was one of three wings of C-130s from which aircraft and crews were drawn to supplement existing PACAF C-130 units for Vietnam operations.

On July 1, 1967 all USAF troop carrier units were redesignated as "tactical airlift" and the 463rd became the 463rd Tactical Airlift Wing, while its squadrons became tactical airlift squadrons. The change, which was a simple matter of paperwork, was due to a realignment of airlift forces and the new title was selected because it allegedly better described the mission.

Because of the superior short-field capabilities of the B-models, the 463rd was assigned to support forward field operations in III Corps, thus leading to the most difficult of airlift assignments in the 1966-67 time period. Wing crews operated from an advance base at Tan Son Nhut Air Base outside Saigon. The Tet Offensive of 1968 and the simultaneous siege of the Marine Combat Base at Khe Sanh placed 463rd crews in the most dangerous conditions faced by airlifters during the period of US involvement of ground troops of the war. Crews from the 463rd joined other C-130 crews in the vital - and dangerous - resupply missions over the besieged base. 463rd crews airdropped supplies to units of the First Cavalry Division when they went into the A Shau Valley in the spring of 1968. A wing airplane and crew were lost to enemy fire. Kham Duc is a name that will forever live in C-130 history - one 463rd crew was shot down during the evacuation of the camp. All told, the 463rd lost nine C-130s to enemy action in Vietnam, of which five were shot down and four were destroyed on the ground. Eight others were lost to operational causes. At least 45 463rd personnel lost their lives in crashes and several suffered wounds. Two 463rd maintenance personnel were killed by hostile fire while on the ground at a forward base where they had been sent to repair a broken airplane.

The 463rd headquarters remained at Mactan until mid-1968, when the wing and the 772nd and 774th squadrons transferred to Clark Air Base to join the 29th and 773rd. Although the 463rd was part of the 315th Air Division, the wing's airplanes and crews were under the operational control of the 834th Air Division, a unit that was established in Saigon to control all US Air Force airlift in South Vietnam. Wing crews rotated initially to Tan Son Nhut until the spring of 1969,

when the rotation moved to Cam Ranh Bay. Rotations were of 16-day duration, during which the crew would fly missions as scheduled by the 834th Airlift Center in Saigon. Maintenance and other personnel served in South Vietnam for periods ranging from two weeks to six months at a time. In the spring of 1969 the Air Force deactivated the 315th Air Division, at which time the 463rd became part of the Clark-based Thirteenth Air Force, the controlling agency for Pacific Air Forces units in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines. The 20th Operations Squadron also became part of the 463rd at this time. The 20th, previously another 315th AD unit, operated an assortment of transport aircraft, including C-118s used for air evacuation of patients from hospitals in Vietnam to Clark and a quartet of large Douglas C-124s that transferred to Clark when the Military Airlift Command phased out its fleet of Globemasters. The C-124s operated into and within Southeast Asia carrying "outsize" cargo that was too large for C-130 lift.

In early 1969 the 463rd began COMMANDO VAULT, a special project involving the delivery of 10,000-pound M-121 bombs to create "instant" helicopter landing zones. The 10,000-pound bombs were replaced by more powerful 15,000 Blu-82 bombs when the supply of M-121s was used up. The huge weapons were detonated all over South Vietnam to create LZs and sometimes against communist troop concentrations. The invasion of Cambodia in the spring of 1970 began with the detonation of a pair of Blu-82 bombs. Blu-82s were also used in Laos for Operation Lam Son 719.

In 1970, after the Cambodian Incursion, in which 463rd crews played a large role, President Richard Nixon began withdrawing troops from South Vietnam as he had promised during the 1968 presidential campaign. Several C-130 units were slated for deactivation, including the 463rd. The 29th TAS was the first to go; it deactivated in August 1970 and its personnel transferred to the other squadrons. The 463rd Wing survived for another year. The wing inactivated on December 31, 1971. The 774th Tactical Airlift Squadron remained active at Clark until mid-1972.

With the inactivation of the 463rd, the wing's history came to a close. Subsequently, the unit designation and lineage was given to a Tactical Air Command C-130 wing at Dyess AFB, Texas, (the 516th TAW) where it remained into the 1990s. The designation now belongs to an Air Mobility Command mobility group at Little Rock AFB, Arkansas which inherited the lineage of the old 463rd.

The 463rd Airlift Group was activated at Little Rock Air Force Base on April 1, 1997. Absorbing the 50th and 61st Airlift Squadrons from the 314th, the 463<sup>rd</sup> is an operational unit with 28 C-130 aircraft in its inventory and 1,100 personnel. The 50th AS operates the C-130HE version of the Hercules while the 61st operates the standard C-130E.

Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command commander, delivered the 463rd Airlift Group's first combat-ready C-130J Hercules March 13. The aircraft will be used in combat operations around the world. "This is a big day for Little Rock and it is a big day for Air Mobility Command. I'm really excited about what the future holds," said General McNabb. "I have gotten to fly the

C-130J in theater with the Air National Guard. What a difference it made not only to the capability, but the contribution it makes to this global war on terrorism." The general said his command's newest tactical airlifter is the latest link to a proud 51-year C-130 legacy of tactical airlift. "This airplane doesn't just represent America, it is America," said General McNabb. The 463rd Airlift Group is a primary component in the war on terrorism and the battle for Iraq. They are credited with taking more than 5,200 convoys off Iraqi roads through their tactical airlift mission there. The new aircraft and its capabilities are another opportunity for the 463rd to push the boundaries of tactical airlift, said Col. John. Gomez, 463rd AG commander. "We look forward to the opportunity to modernize the C-130 fleet as we remain on the forefront of national defense," said Colonel Gomez. "The quantum leap of capability provided by the J model allows us to go higher, faster and farther with more cargo as we respond to crises around the world." "No one has a stronger track record of expanding the envelope or increasing our theater airlift capability to support the warfighter than the men and women of Little Rock Air Force Base," the colonel said. 2007

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Air Force Order of Battle

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#### Sources

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.

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