

498th BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, TACTICAL



MISSION

LINEAGE

498th Bombardment Squadron (Medium) constituted, 3 Sep 1942
Activated, 8 Sep 1942
Inactivated, 19 Dec 1945
Redesignated 498th Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, 22 Mar 1954
Activated, 19 Jul 1954
Inactivated, 25 Jun 1959

STATIONS

Columbia AAB, SC, 8 Sep 1942
Walterboro AAFld, SC, 6 Mar-16 Apr 1943
Port Moresby, New Guinea, 5 Jun 1943
Dobodura, New Guinea, 9 Jan 1944
Nadzab, New Guinea, 20 Feb 1944
Biak 13 Jul 1944
Tacloban, Leyte, 27 Dec 1944
San Marcelino Luzon, 12 Feb 1945
Clark Field, Luzon, 11 May 1945
Ie Shima, 20 Jul-1 Dec 1945
Fort Lewis, Wa, 17-19 Dec 1945
Langley AFB, VA, 19 Jul 1954-25 Jun 1959

ASSIGNMENTS

345th Bombardment Group, 8 Sep 1942-19 Dec 1945

345th Bombardment Group, 19 Ju1 1954

345th Bombardment Wing, 8 Oct 1957-25 Jun 1959

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-25, 1942-1945

B-25C

B-25D

B-25J

B-26, 1954-1955

B-57, 1955-1959

COMMANDERS

Maj William A. James, 16 Aug 1954

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Air Offensive, Japan

China Defensive

New Guinea

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

Rabaul, New Britain, 2 Nov 1943

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

EMBLEM



498th Bombardment Squadron, Medium

498th Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, emblem: Over a light blue triangular shaped pattern, edged white, outlined of the first, an orange and black checky missile-bodied falcon, head, wings and tail white, outline and detail black, shadows light gray. (Approved, 10 Oct 1955)



498th Bombardment Squadron, Tactical

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in Southwest and Western Pacific, 24 Jun 1943-1 Sep 1945.

The 498th Bomb Squadron (TAC), commanded by Major William A. James, was re-activated at Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, on 19 July, 1954. As a unit of the 345th Bomb Group "Air Apaches", the squadron won battle credits in Luzon, New Guinea, Leyte, the Northern Solomons, Bismark Archipelago, China and Japan. Flying B-25 "Mitchell" bombers, the 498th won fame for daring low-level attacks on enemy shipping. With other squadrons of the 345th, the 498th dominated Japanese shipping lanes in the China Seas, attacking and destroying convoys from Formosa to the Japanese mainland. Known as "The Falcons", the 498th was awarded Distinguished Unit Citations for outstanding performance in New Guinea and Palawan, Philippine Islands.

Major William A. James, commanding officer of the 498th Bomb Squadron (TAG) is no stranger to the 345th Bomb Group, having served with the "Air Apaches" during World War II.

Born in Metropolis, Illinois, Major James attended schools there prior to his enlistment in the Army Air Force on September 25, 1941. In September of 1942, he received his wings at Kelly Field, Texas, and was later assigned to the 500th Bomb Squadron of the 345th Bomb Group. Major James was with the 345th in New Guinea from May, 1943, until May, 1944, flying fifty-one combat missions in B-25's. Upon completion of his combat tour, he returned to the United States and served for one year as an instructor at Greenville and Columbus, S. C .

Following the end of the war, Major James was assigned to duty in the Philippine Islands, where he flew for a year as pilot for Paul V. McNutt, then United States High Commissioner for the Philippines. Returning from the Philippines, he served for two years as a special air mission pilot at Boiling Air Force Base, and for three years was an instructor at Enid Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

Another 498th B-29, T Sq 28, 42-63432, was luckier. Ice had formed on the plane's windows fifteen minutes before the target and its pilot, Capt. Francis J. Murray, had to drop out of formation to avoid causing a mid-air collision. The plane was then jumped by Japanese fighters, which made pass after pass at the lone Superfort. They riddled the airplane, shooting out the fuel transfer system and puncturing the oil tanks. Then a flak hit added to the damage, jamming one bomb bay door so that it could not be closed, but T Sq 28 stayed in the air, freed itself of the enemy and headed for home.

For six hours the airplane flew on until, with 1,200 gallons of fuel which could not be transferred still in the tanks, the engines coughed to a stop. There was nothing to do then but ditch, in a rain squall which T Sq 28 entered as she descended toward the Pacific. She hit at 120 mph, stopped in three seconds and broke in half. All but the copilot got out into three life rafts, which were then secured together. The men were afloat for ten days before a PB4Y spotted their last flare, and they were then picked up the next day by a destroyer — three hundred miles from Saipan.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Updated:

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.

Unit yearbook. *405 Fighter Bomber Wing, 1954*. Army and Navy Publishing Co. Inc., Baton Rouge, LA. 1954.