

3rd AIRCRAFT REPAIR UNIT (FLOATING)

LINEAGE

3rd Aircraft Repair Unit (Floating)

STATIONS

Lingayen, Philippines

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Aircraft Repair Units (Floating) mission was B-29 repair. These organizations provided bomber maintenance while on board a ship. The vessels were Liberty Ships with a total complement of 344 men. Liberty Ships had shop space big enough to accommodate components of the B-29s. These ships returned hundreds of wrecked or seriously damaged B-29s and fighters to battle.

The Aircraft Repair Units (Floating) were constituted as Floating Air Depots. The units were immediately redesignated as Aircraft Repair Units (Floating) and activated in 1944.

Aircraft Repair Units (Floating) maintenance training was accomplished at Brookley Field, AL and naval operations training was conducted at Point Clear, AL.

The ships were operated by the Army Transport Service, all of whose officers and men were merchant mariners. They were armed against air attack: each Liberty ship had a 3-inch gun at the bow and a 5-inch gun aft, plus twelve 20mm and two 40mm cannons. The guns were manned by Naval Armed Guard crews.

Acquiring the ships and getting them to the deepwater terminal at Point Clear, close to the Marine Air Technical Services Command at Brookley Field, outside Mobile, Alabama, began in the spring of 1944. Once in place, they had to be modified. For the Liberty ships this meant fitting them with machine tools, cranes, and all the elements of complete machine shops. Similarly, equipment for sheet metal work, fabric repair facilities. They carried a large inventory of steel, lumber, aluminum, and other materials to manufacture needed parts. Facilities had to be built into the ships to accommodate two R-4B helicopters on board. These were to locate downed planes, rescue their flight crews, ferry shipwrights and mechanics wherever they might be needed on the islands of the Pacific campaign, and to haul parts. Each ship was also equipped with two motor launches and two amphibious trucks for carrying parts too heavy for the helicopters. Divers were part of each crew, so room for their support equipment was also necessary.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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