

15 AIR TRANSPORT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

15 Ferrying Squadron constituted, 18 Feb 1942

Activated, 7 Mar 1942

Redesignated 15 Air Transport Squadron

Redesignated 15 Transport Squadron, 25 July 1942

Disbanded, 1 September 1943

Reconstituted and redesignated 15 Air Transport Squadron, 1 June 1948

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1948

Activated and Redesignated 15 Air Transport Squadron (Heavy), 20 Jul 1952

Inactivated, 1 Jan 1965

STATIONS

Presque Isle AAF, ME, 7 Mar 1942

Westover AFB, MA, 1 June 1948-1 Oct 1948

Westover AFB, MA, 20 Jul 1952

Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, 20 April 1955

ASSIGNMENTS

Air Corps Ferrying Command, 7 March 1942

8 Ferrying Group, 25 Jul 1942-1 Sep 1943

520 Air Transport Group, 1 Jun 1948-1 Oct 1948

1600 Air Transport Group, 20 Jul 1952

1607 Air Transport Group (Heavy), 20 Apr 1955

1607 Air Transport Wing (Heavy), 18 Jan 1963-1 Jan 1965

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-54, 1947–1948
C-124, 1952–1965

COMMANDERS

Maj Wayne S. Crawford Jr.
Maj Benjamin F. Armstrong, 10 Jan 1957
LTC Harvey E. Beedy, 16 Jun 1958
LTC Louis O. Williamson, 2 Jul 1962
LTC Henry G. Bierbaum, 25 Feb 1963
LTC William C. McCamy, 5 Jul 1963
LTC John G. Weir, 13 Dec 1963-1 Jan 1965

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



The squadron emblem was designed in 1959 by F. Jack Morris and depicts an eagle holding a lantern sitting in a wagon loaded with cargo boxes.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

On 8 March 1955, Headquarters, Military Air Transport Service (MATS), United States Air Force, Washington, D.C., directed that the Commanders of the Atlantic Division, MATS, the 1600th Air Transport Group (Heavy) and the 15 Air Transport Squadron (Heavy); all of Westover Air Force Base, Massachusetts, take the necessary action to move the 15 Air Transport Squadron (H) from Westover Air Force Base to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. On 9 March 1955, movement orders were issued affecting the transfer. The unit would move at its current strength and its transfer would begin on the earliest possible date after 15 April 1955 and would be completed no later than 15 May 1955. The unit would remain assigned to the Atlantic Division of MATS. When the unit move is completed, the 15 Air Transport Squadron (H) would be relieved of assignment to the 1600th Air Transport Group and would be assigned to the 1607th Air Transport Group (Heavy), Dover Air Force Base, Delaware. Unit authorized strength was 68 officers and 342 enlisted personnel with twelve C-124s assigned. The squadron commander was Major Wayne S. Crawford Jr.

It wasn't long after the 15 Air Transport Squadron's arrival at Dover Air Force Base, that the squadron and its crews were initiated into a tradition that would last for the next ten years. During three weeks in May 1955 a crew from the 15, in addition to crews from the 40th Air Transport Squadron and the 45th Air Transport Squadron, operated five aircraft in support of Project ICECUBE, the construction of the DEWLINE network in northern Canada. Operating out of Dover Air Force Base, these five aircraft and crews made a total of 28 hazardous ice landings at Mount Joli, Quebec, carrying over one million pounds of cargo.

The mission responsibilities of the 15 Air Transport Squadron's airlift operation expanded considerably. In the years following, the 1607th Air Transport Wing assumed the additional responsibility for logistical airlift operations including entire unit deployments, airdrop supply, airlanded supply, scheduled and nonscheduled airlift, joint airborne operations and training to include the capability for airdrop of personnel and cargo.

With its new mission directive, the 15 Air Transport Squadron would assume its share of responsibilities in major joint mobility exercises and global operations conducted during the "Cold War". Examples include: Big Slam/Puerto Pine, March 1960, was an exercise that deployed 22,000 combat Army troops and 12,000 tons of gear from stateside bases to Ramey AFB and Roosevelt Roads Naval Air Station, Puerto Rico; Check Mate II, September 1961, involved the deployment of the 301st Airborne Division from Fort Campbell, Kentucky to bases in Europe; Southern Express, October 1962, a NATO exercise which involved airlifting troops from central Europe to northern Greece; Big Lift, October 1963, the deployment of a full Army division from Texas to Germany; The Cuban Missile Crisis, October 1962.

In support of President John F. Kennedy's decision to blockade Cuba, the 1607th Air Transport Wing was called upon to support the buildup of forces in the southeastern United States. The wing and its aircrews worked at peak capacity airlifting troops and supplies from bases throughout the country to Florida and Guantanamo Bay. History shows that we were within 36 hours of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union; Operation Good Hope, September 1957, the airlift of arms

support to Jordan. Forty vehicles equipped with 109mm weapons were carried on five C-124s from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia to Amman Jordan; The Congo Airlift, also known as Operation "New Tape" was, at the time, history's longest lasting operational airlift, lasting 3 1/2 years, from 1960 to 1964. A crew from the 15 Air Transport Squadron was the first Dover Air Force Base unit deployed in support of this operation and LtCol Harvey E. Beedy, Commander of the 15 ATS, was selected as the initial Provisional Squadron Commander headquartered at Chateauroux, France.

23 March 1958: A C-124 and crew from the 15 ATS was diverted from a scheduled flight to Iceland to airlift a helicopter and crew to Mestersvig, Greenland. The helicopter was needed to evacuate a critically injured crewman from the Norwegian vessel DROTT, which was icebound in the Greenland sea.

During its tenure at Dover Air Force Base, what seemed impossible to many was considered day-to-day routine operations to the aircrews of the 15 Air Transport Squadron. On February 7, 1960, a 15 ATS aircrew flew a record breaking non-stop flight from Hickam AFB, Hawaii to Dover AFB in eighteen hours and forty minutes.

The 15 ATS flew 623 hours in support of the AMIGO Airlift, mercy missions to Santiago, Chile in May 1960, when an earthquake literally re-made parts of that country.

In 1962, the 15 flew the last leg of the four month round-the-world tour of John Glenn's space capsule Friendship VII.

January 1963: The wing's 15 ATS, on TDY at Chateauroux, France, assisted in flying aid to flood victims in the Rabat Province of Morocco.

February 1963: Still at Chateauroux, the 15 ATS assisted in flying aid to victims of an earthquake that struck in the vicinity of Barce, Libya.

In July 1963, the 15 ATS flew the first leg of the presidential support mission for John F. Kennedy from Andrews AFB to Dublin, Ireland.

February 1964: The 15 ATS delivered a telespectograph to the Ascension Islands in support of space project FIRE. The delivery was believed to be the first such airlift in which the instrument was delivered as a complete unit.

The 15 airlifted supplies and emergency equipment to Alaska after an earthquake struck that state in March 1964; and many re-supply missions from Thule Air Base, Greenland to the northern most weather outposts at Nord and Alert. Both stations are within some 500 miles of the North Pole.

In November 1964, the Secretary of Defense announced that eighty Department of Defense activities within the United States would be reduced or discontinued and that a troop carrier squadron would be transferred to Dover Air Force Base. Consequently, the 15 Air Transport Squadron would deactivate along with the organization and reactivation of the 9th Troop Carrier

Squadron. Some of the 15 ATS personnel were reassigned directly to the 9th TCS and others would be transferred to McChord Air Force Base, Washington and others to Southeast Asia.

USAF Unit Histories

Created: 26 Feb 2012

Updated: 28 Oct 2015

Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *Westover AFB, MA.* @1954

Unit yearbook. *1607 Air Transport Wing (H), Dover AFB, DE.* Army and Navy Publishing Company, Baton Rouge, LA. 1957.