

# 3706 AF BASE UNIT

## **MISSION**

Basic Training Center

## **LINEAGE**

3706 AAF Base Unit

3706 AF Base Unit

## **STATIONS**

Sheppard AFB, TX

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

## **COMMANDERS**

Col Eugene A. Lohman, 23 Dec 1944

Col Rosenham Beam, 4 Nov 1945

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **OPERATIONS**

On 31 August 1946, the War Department placed Sheppard on inactive status. The 3706th Army Air Forces (later, Air Force Base) Unit remained at Sheppard from May 1944 to August 1948 as

the caretaker unit. Then on 1 August 1948, the American flag was again unfurled over Sheppard, this time in response to the Cold War. Once again, Sheppard reported to Air Training Command.

01 May 44 The War Department established the 3706th Army Air Forces Base Unit (Basic Training Center) to act as Sheppard's host unit.

01 Jun 45 The 3706th AAF Base Unit (Basic Training Center) became the 3706th AAF Base Unit (Basic Training Center and Flying School--Helicopter and Liaison).

01 Aug 48 Air Training Command activated Sheppard AFB as a basic training center. The first unit to be organized was the 3706th Air Force Base Unit.

28 Aug 48 Air Training Command discontinued Sheppard's 3706th Air Force Base Unit.

During the first six months of 1945, Sheppard experienced a renaissance of training. By May, the 3706th Army Air Forces Base Unit was once again in the basic training business with more than 15,500 new recruits. Training officials also learned that the Air Force planned to transfer three new technical schools to Sheppard: a school for B-29 flight engineers from Lowry Field; a Helicopter Pilot, Maintenance, and Rotary Wing School from Chanute Field; and a C-82 aircraft mechanic school. The B-29 was the Air Force principal long-range bomber used in the final assault against Japan while the C-82 was a long-range transport plane utilized extensively in the China-Burma and Pacific theaters of war. On 19 May 1945, the first contingent of B-29 students began arriving followed in June by the training staffs of both the helicopter and C-82 schools. To handle the increased in-training load, enlisted men serving as airplane mechanics but awaiting assignment to become bombardiers, pilots or navigators were shifted in early 1945 from "on-the-line trainees" to cadre status to compensate for the lack of permanent party personnel at Sheppard.

To manage the increased in-training load more effectively, on 1 June 1945 the 3706 AAF Base Unit (Basic Training Center) was renamed the 3706 AAF Base Unit (Basic Training Center for Flying School--Helicopter and Liaison). By June the total military strength at Sheppard had reached 35,000. One month later, the base population peaked at 46,392 servicemen. To accommodate the overflow, training hangars and schoolrooms were turned into temporary barracks while tents with cots quickly appeared all over the base.

By November 1945, actual training continued in only two courses: glider maintenance and air traffic control. Departments such as liaison and helicopter training continued to lose instructors who were leaving the Air Force. In December, the 78th AAF Base Unit was transferred to Langley Field, Virginia. On 22 May 1946, personnel and equipment associated with the Helicopter and Liaison Departments which had been revived briefly, began transferring to San Marcos Field, Texas, a sub-base of Randolph Field. The Rotary Wing Mechanics School had been transferred to Keesler the previous fall. As part of the move to San Marcos, nineteen helicopters left the field on 29 May, the largest mass flight of "egg beaters" ever at Sheppard

Field. In June 1946, the last vestiges of training, the Air Traffic Control School and the Glider Maintenance course, were discontinued. Finally, the last recruits finished basic training here in July 1946. In five years, almost half a million men had passed through the gates of the Basic Training Center.

Left behind when the base officially closed were some 3,000 personnel from the 3706 AAF Base Unit who oversaw the orderly shut down of services. One after another, general services were phased out. The Station Hospital became a dispensary. All patients needing hospitalization were transported by air to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. All mess halls and the Provost Marshall's Office were discontinued at the end of September. The Post Exchange was inactivated and all of its fixed assets were either disposed of through sales to veterans and civilians or transferred to the Army Exchange Service, Regional Office, in Dallas. The Base Service Office ceased operating on 15 September although one theater remained open until 10 October. The last remaining function, the Finance Office, went out of business on 15 October leaving only a small maintenance crew of 12 officers and 72 enlisted men under the command of Lt Col James P. Lyle. On 30 April 1947, Colonel Lyle departed the base, handing jurisdiction for the installation to the United States Army Engineers in Denison, Texas. The City of Wichita Falls retained control of the land and buildings at Sheppard Field subject to a provision that allowed the War Department to repossess the field on a thirty-day basis if needed.

The first unit to be organized on the base, which was formally activated on 15 August 1948, was the 3706th Air Force Base Unit. Assigned to the Indoctrination Division at Lackland AFB, it consisted of a headquarters and headquarters squadron, a provisional training group, a provisional maintenance group, and a hospital. Once the base had been organized, the 3706th Air Force Base Unit was deactivated and replaced by the 3750th Basic Training Wing. The wing was composed of five units: the 3750th Station Hospital, the 3750th Air Base Group, the 3750th Maintenance and Supply Group, and the 3750th Basic Training Group. Because of the rapid influx of no prior service students the wing established a second training unit, the 3750th Basic Training Group. When Sheppard AFB held an open house on 18 September 1948, to celebrate the first anniversary of the newly independent Air Force, more than 9,000 airmen were stationed at Sheppard. As of 7 October 1948, the total population of Sheppard --officers and enlisted men, civilians and trainees --had grown to 12,053.

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USAF Unit Histories  
Created: 26 Mar 2012  
Updated:

#### Sources

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Unit yearbook. *3706 AAF Base Unit. Sheppard Field, TX, 1 Aug 1945*. Army and Navy Publishing Company. Baton Rouge, LA. 1945.  
*Sustaining the Wings, A Fifty-Year History of Sheppard Air Force Base (1941-1991)*. Dwight W. Tuttle. Midwestern State University Press. Wichita Falls, TX. 1991.