2 WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON, MEDIUM

MISSION
Squadron mission was to fly weather route reconnaissance over the Hump, from Barrackpore/Gushkara India to Kunming China and synoptic flights over the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal.

LINEAGE
2 Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Air Route (Medium) constituted, 20 Jan 1944
Activated, 1 Feb 1944
Redesignated 2 Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, Medium, 20 Jul 1944
Inactivated, 28 Dec 1945

STATIONS
Key Field, MS
Demopolis AAF, AL, Jun 1944
Key Field, MS
Camp Anza, CA, Aug 1944
Guskhara, India, 14 Oct 1944

ASSIGNMENTS
III Reconnaissance Command
I Tactical Air Division on 18 April 1944
III Tactical Air Division by 1 May 1944
Army Air Forces, India-Burma Theater

WEAPON SYSTEMS
B-25

COMMANDERS
Lt Col James B. Baker, 1 Feb 1944
Capt Wallace B. Black, 15 Apr 1945
Lt Col Arthur A. McCartan, 7 Jun 1945
Capt Parks B. Warnick, Jr., Sep 1945

HONORS
Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers
Burma, 2 Apr 1942-28 Jan 1945
China Defensive, 4 Jul 1942-4 May 1945
Central Burma, 29 Jan-15 Jul 1945

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM
The caricatured brown bear is symbolic of the squadron, rough and ready. Running through space with his left forepaw shading his eyes represents speedy reconnaissance. His attire indicates his ability to venture out in any kind of weather. The Anemometer portrays the equipment he must carry to obtain the necessary weather data. (Approved, 8 Mar 1945)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS
Operational flying by the 2nd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (Medium) began in October 1944. At that time the squadron began weather reconnaissance flights over the Bay of Bengal from advance bases in India. In November of the same year a detachment of the squadron was placed in China to accomplish weather reconnaissance in the North China area in direct support of XX Bomber Command operations. With the cessation of operations of the XX Bomber Command the squadron continued work in China in support of the 14th Air Force and Pacific operations.

Weather data procured by this squadron has been of great assistance to the forecasters of the Calcutta and Chengtu weather centrals of the 10 Weather Region. Data obtained over Burma, in the Bay of Bengal and in adjacent waters has been obtained on some occasions at the request of meteorologists of the British Fleet and used by them in operations that followed. Information obtained on missions flown by this squadron has been used in direct support of operations of the

XX Bomber Command and other tactical units both against targets in China and the India-Burma sector.

The missions flown over the Bay of Bengal and adjacent waters and land areas have been carried out to the maximum range of the squadron aircraft often times at deck level. In China all missions have been flown off the beaten track over hazardous unchartered terrain in the face of extreme weather conditions and probable enemy interception. All missions are single plane operations performed without benefit of fighter escort in heavily loaded B-25s modified and equipped for long range weather reconnaissance. All operations call for extremely precise work on the part of all crew members over and above that normally expected and demanded in other type operations.

Much of the operational flying of this unit has been accomplished over terrain and waters controlled by the enemy. In order to obtain the extreme ranges desired it has been necessary to carry dropable, non-selfsealing bomb-bay tanks despite the ever present possibility of enemy interception and attack. The fact that contact with the enemy has been successfully avoided on all missions denotes extreme care on the part of all crew members concerned in planning and completing all missions. Operations in China have been carried out to such areas as South Peiping, the Yellow Sea coastal regions, the Hankow area, and other areas in which the enemy is situated in force. In the India-Burma sector in addition to the extensive over-water operations carried out, daily aircraft have penetrated into enemy territory in the immediate vicinity of such highly defended targets as Bangkok, Moulmein and Rangoon.

The 2nd delivers from a vast chunk of the earth's surface and from the great layers of unexplored air that lie above it. It has 2,300 men spread thin - south, deep into the Indian Ocean far below the equator; north, to the Siberian border; west, into Baluchistan and Sinkiang; and east, to the China Sea. They work at some 100 stations, dotting a gigantic, rough parallelogram about 3,000 miles deep and 4,000 miles wide. They observe, plot and forecast weather for all planes that fly in India and Burma, across the Hump, and in China.

The Weather Squadron's stations are located in some of the remotest spots in the world. The days roll into each other in an indistinguishable series of balloon runs, instrument readings, and radio reports.

Moving personnel and weather and communications equipment into China was a difficult task at a time when every ounce flown over the Hump was questioned. The squadron acquired two C-47s of their own. These two ships, affectionately called "the Weather Airline", have carried most of the personnel and the great bulk of supplies to all corners of the beat.

Dependent at first on a conglomeration of tactical radio networks and Chinese communications, the Weather Squadron has gradually taken over most of the job of insuring swift and regular dispatch of weather information.

Reports also come in from the U.S. Army and other intelligence officers in all parts of China, from British and Russian (American radio monitors pick up Russian weather information from uncoded broadcasts) sources, and from pilots returning from missions over enemy territory.

Empty spaces on the meteorological map are often filled in by flying weather reconnaissance squadron, flown by skilled young pilots who make long, dangerous flights to take needed recordings.

But increasingly, the basic material from which weather maps are drawn is coming from the squadron's own stations, of which there are 36 in China alone.

The record of the Weather Squadron is highlighted with new techniques and improvisations, some of which have already become permanent contributions to the science and practice of meteorology.

In the Assam Valley in NE India, jumping off place for all Hump flying, Capt. Donald E. Martin and M/Sgt. Paul Bauer worked out their own tricks for forecasting when fog would come down and when it would lift.

In East China a young forecaster, Lt. Lester Supiro, found a way of making hydrogen for inflating the balloons out of materials found in China. For ferro-silicon he substituted aluminum salvaged from wrecked planes and locally processed. The technique, which has saved up to 25,000 pounds of freight each month, has been adopted all over the world by the Army.

But far more important than new methods are the new facts the squadron has discovered about Asiatic meteorology. These slowly accumulating facts used every day to clear aircraft on combat or transport missions are systematically collected and studied at a weather control station set up in West China in December 1943 and at a similar establishment in Calcutta. Here young men to whom a few years ago weather was something good or bad for ball games or trips to the beach have actually begun the first orderly, continuous study of Asiatic weather ever undertaken.

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