

# 118 AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION SQUADRON



## **MISSION**

## **LINEAGE**

118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron federally recognized, 20 Nov 1961

## **STATIONS**

Berry Field, Nashville, TN

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **COMMANDERS**

LTC Jack Norman, Jr.

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**



## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 118<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron received its federal recognition on November 20, 1961. The squadron was initially commanded by Major Charles P. McGuire. In January of 1962, M/Sgt. Donald Durhair was assigned to the squadron as a full-time technician. In addition thereto, Major Mary Wickstrom and Staff Sergeant Harold Baldwin were assigned to the squadron as United States Air Force Advisors.

The squadron, at that time, consisted of three flights; the 105th flight located at Berry Field; the 155th flight located at Memphis; and the 103rd flight located at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Through the efforts of Major McGuire, Major Wickstrom, Sergeant Durham, Sergeant Baldwin and others, a recruiting drive was put on for the acquisition of medical technicians and flight nurses. The contribution of Major Wickstrom toward the formation of the squadron was invaluable, in that she devoted unlimited time and effort in attempting to solicit nurses for the squadron. She overcame many obstacles in the form of opposition from local hospitals, and was very successful in her efforts to recruit flight nurses. As a result of her outstanding efforts, Major Wickstrom was awarded the Tennessee Air National Guard Commendation Ribbon.

In the early part of 1963, Major McGuire left the squadron and temporary command was then assumed by First Lieutenant Harry Nichols, Jr.

On the 15th of July, 1963, command of the squadron was assumed by Captain Jack Norman, Jr., who now commands the squadron.

In the spring of 1964, Major Wickstrom finished her tour of duty at Berry Field and was transferred to France. Her place was filled by Major Edith E. Rothenburg, who has continued with the outstanding work performed by Major Wickstrom. Major Rothenburg has devoted all of her efforts to aiding and assisting the squadron in becoming more effective. She takes a vital interest in the squadron activity and maintains a close liaison with squadron personnel.

When the 118 Air Transport Wing was reassigned to WESTAF in the spring of 1964, the 118 Ameron lost the 103rd flight at Philadelphia, and acquired 183rd flight at Jackson, Mississippi. The 183rd flight in Jackson has demonstrated that it is one of the most capable and outstanding air evacuation flights in the reserve program. It continuously maintains a one hundred per cent crew qualified status. With the acquisition of the Jackson flight, 118 Ameron has made tremendous advancement. The squadron is now at seventy-five per cent of authorized strength, and has a total of twenty-nine flight nurses, of which twenty-seven are fully qualified. It has the highest number of fully qualified overseas flight crews of any aeromedical squadron in the entire reserve program. In addition thereto, the grades that the various nurses and medical technicians have maintained in their formal Air Force schooling have been far above average and have been widely recognized by numerous awards and decorations.

The impact of the 118 Ameron toward the over-all Wing mission has been recognized and appreciated by the entire Wing. The squadron has enjoyed magnificent cooperation from the entire Wing, a fact that has had a great deal to do with the over-all success of the squadron. Crews of the 118 Ameron have flown all over the world and have frequently participated in regular Air Force Air Evac missions. The crew of the 118 Ameron are now flying regularly on WESTAF Air Evac missions and are ranging all over the world. Recently, a crew flew missions into Saigon and then back to the United States.

The squadron is especially proud of its morale and readily boasts of being the best Air Evac squadron in existence. This fact was confirmed during the recent annual inspection, at which time the inspector, Major Estell stated that he felt the 118 Ameron to be the best over-all Air Evac squadron in the reserve program.

In addition to its regular duties, the squadron is called upon on the average of one mission per week to perform "mercy missions". The response of squadron personnel to these missions has been outstanding and the missions have spanned the continental United States. The medical crews are highly qualified and competent, and are capable of coping with almost any emergency. This has been demonstrated on more than one occasion when emergency situations arose on mercy missions that called for clear thinking and a cool head.

On 13 April 1964, members of the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, with a flight crew

from the 105 Air Transport Squadron, participated in a dramatic race against death. At 1330 hours, TSgt Don Durham received a call from the Nashville General Hospital to the effect that a patient needed to be rushed to Duke University Hospital at Durham, NC, to the pressure chamber there.

A hit-run accident victim, the patient was unconscious and gangrene had set in on many of his injuries. He was advised the patient would be dead within a few hours if not flown to Durham where he could receive pressure chamber treatment. TSgt Durham immediately called the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron Commander, Capt Jack Norman who initiated Wing Operational Procedure for mercy missions under the direction of the Wing Commander, Brig Gen Enoch B. Stephenson, Jr.

A flight of "Urgent" nature was then requested through the Group Air Command Post. TSgt Durham then obtained a medical crew from the alert list and we began loading necessary equipment. Since the patient was unconscious and on "forced breathing" it was necessary for 118 AMERON to supply a breathing apparatus and oxygen. General Hospital was directed to rush the patient to Berry Field by 1530 hours.

Meanwhile, Berry Field personnel at once began efforts accomplishment of the mission. Lt Col John Wade coordinated aircraft and flight requirements. Obtained as pilots were Maj John Tune, Jr., and Capt John B. Murphy. Even though a weather front lay over the Appalachians, between Nashville and Durham, and Weather advised that penetration of the numerous thunderstorms was doubtful, it was decided by all personnel concerned that an attempt must be made. At 1530 the ambulance arrived and within ten minutes the patient was aboard C-97, the engines were started and the aircraft readied for taxi. At 1550 the C-97 took off. Two General Hospital physicians accompanied the patient. TSgt Donald Durham and Namon Harpen administered the patient all during the flight. The flight was designated by Air Traffic Control Center as "urgent" Air Evacuation Mission and was given preference over all air traffic while en route to Durham.

They touched down at the Raleigh-Durham Municipal Airport at 1750 hours. All traffic around the airport had been cleared and was required to "hold" in order that the flight might get in without delay. An ambulance was waiting and sped the patient to Duke University Hospital. From the time the patient left Nashville General Hospital until he was admitted to Duke, less than three hours had lapsed. En route, the medical technicians of the 118 AMERON had been required to administer oxygen, antibiotics, blood, plasma and other medications. Breathing equipment which belongs to the squadron was transferred to the ambulance at the airport to be used in the ride to the hospital.

Captain Norman attributed the success of the delicate mission to the excellent cooperation between all affected elements at Berry Field. Success of the mission reflects credit upon the combat readiness of the 118 Air Transport Wing and the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. Unfortunately the patient involved in the mercy mission died some time later at Duke University Hospital. The flight, however, was credited not only with prolonging his life, but also with providing his only chance for survival. Many stories are written only when such a patient survives. But this was written to show the behind-the-scenes efforts involved where the success of the mission lies in the mere fact that the Air National Guardsmen here had accomplished their purpose — to provide that single chance the patient needed to fight for survival.

Three Nashville-based units were attached to the 118 TAW for administrative purposes and logistical support. They were the 118th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, the 118 Communications Flight, and the 105 Weather Flight. The 118 AES relocated its headquarters at Berry Field, moving in August 1971, from the main hangar into the building formerly housed by the Army National Guard helicopter squadron.

During the first quarter of 1972, the wing saw another organizational change that was, in effect, a step toward completion of the conversion begun a year earlier. When most Nashville units of the wing were converted to the Tactical Air Command in 1971, the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron remained under the wing's previous parent, the Military Airlift Command. The squadron itself was converted to TAC effective 30 March 1972. There was no change in the unit's manning strength, and Lt Col Jack Norman Jr. continued as Squadron Commander.

On 15 May 1974, the 118 AES was ordered to reduce the authorized number of flight nurses and changing some grade structures. The changes, the first since the 118 AES left MAC in 1971, brought the unit under the manning authorization of TAG. The authorized number of flight nurses was reduced from 33 to 25.

In August 1979, the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron with support from the 118 Combat Support Squadron accomplished their annual field training at Savannah, Georgia.

The 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron performed their UTA's at Gulfport Air National Guard Base, Mississippi on 14-15 May 1983. Also, the 118 Combat Support Squadron supported this and proceeded to Eglin Air Force Base FL from 4-18 June 1983.

From 27 July-6 August 1983, the 118 Tactical Hospital and 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron were supported by members of the 118 Combat Support Squadron during the summer camp at Eglin Air Force Base FL.

Two groups from the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron completed their final annual hospital tours. One group was deployed to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland from 16-21 April 1984.

From 16-23 June 1984, the 118 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron deployed to Niagara Falls, New York for annual active duty training.

During the Somalia peacekeeping efforts, when United States army troops were ambushed and killed in a firefight in Mogadishu, the wounded GIs received battlefield medical care from deployed members of the 118th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Tennessee Air National Guard, from Nashville. The bodies were flown out by C-141 aircrews from the 164th out of Memphis. Aircraft and aircrews from all three flying units were involved in action in Haiti, and

they continue to provide support for Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard, the Bosnian peacekeeping mission.

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Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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