

## 731 AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

331 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 28 Jan 1942  
Activated, 15 Jun 1942  
Redesignated 331 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 20 Aug 1943  
Inactivated, 29 Nov 1945  
Redesignated 331 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 13 May 1947  
Activated in the Reserve, 29 May 1947  
Redesignated 331 Bombardment Squadron, Light, 26 Jun 1949  
Ordered to active service, 10 Mar 1951  
Inactivated, 20 Mar 1951  
Redesignated 331 Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 26 May 1952  
Activated in the Reserve, 14 Jun 1952  
Redesignated 331 Bombardment Squadron, Tactical, 18 May 1955  
Redesignated 731 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 1 July 1957  
Ordered to active service, 28 Oct 1962  
Relieved from active duty, 28 Nov 1962  
Redesignated 731 Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1967  
Redesignated 731 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Oct 1972  
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1982  
Activated in the Reserve, 1 Oct 1982  
Redesignated 731 Airlift Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

### STATIONS

MacDill Field, FL, 15 Jun 1942  
Pendleton Field, OR, 29 Jun 1942

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 29 Aug 1942  
Biggs Field, TX, 1 Nov 1942  
Pueblo AAB, CO, 3 Jan-17 Apr 1943  
Earls Colne, England, 11 May 1943  
Bury St. Edmunds, England, 13 Jun 1943-22 Nov 1945  
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 27-29 Nov 1945  
Marietta AAFld, GA, 29 May 1947-20 Mar 1951  
Dobbins AFB, GA, 14 Jun 1952  
Scott AFB, IL, 18 May 1955  
Laurence G. Hanscom Field, MA, 16 Nov 1957  
Westover AFB, MA, 17 Sep 1973-1 Oct 1982  
Peterson AFB, CO, 1 Oct 1982

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

94 Bombardment Group, 15 Jun 1942-29 Nov 1945  
94 Bombardment Group, 29 May 1947-20 Mar 1951  
94 Tactical Reconnaissance (later, 94 Bombardment; 94 Troop Carrier) Group, 14 Jun 1952  
94 Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Apr 1959  
901 Troop Carrier (later, 901 Military Airlift; 901 Tactical Airlift) Group, 11 Feb 1963  
439 Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1974-1 Oct 1982  
901 Tactical Airlift Group, 1 Oct 1982  
302 Tactical Airlift (later, 302 Airlift) Wing, 1 Apr 1985  
302 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1942-1945  
T-6, 1947-1950  
T-7, 1947-1951  
T-11, 1947-1951  
B-26, (by 1949)-1951  
AT-6, 1952-1954  
C-46, 1952-1955  
TF-51, 1953-1955  
F-51, 1953-1954  
B-26, 1953-1955, 1955-1957  
T-28, 1953-1954, 1955  
C-45, 1953-1955  
T-33, 1954-1955  
F-80, 1954-1955  
RB-26, 1954-1955  
F-84, 1954-1955  
C-47, 1955  
C-119, 1957-1966  
C-124, 1966-1972

C-123, 1972-1982

C-130, 1982

## **COMMANDERS**

Maj Ralph H. Saltsman, 15 Jun 1942

Maj Birdsall, 14 Jul 1943-unkn

Maj James H. Ainsworth, 24 Feb 1944-unkn

Maj James H. Ainsworth, 2 Mar 1945

Maj Sidney M. Carter, Jul 1945-unkn

Unkn, 29 May 1947-20 Mar 1951

Unkn, 14 Jun 1952-1959

Maj Stephen T. Keefe Jr., Jun 1959-unkn

Lt Col Fred E. Harrington, Jan 1966

Lt Col Peter A. Kane, 1 Jan 1967

Col Thomas A. Diab, Nov 1968

Lt Col Michael J. Cavaretta, 19 Jan 1971-unkn

Lt Col Charles R. Parrott, Apr 1974

Lt Col Franklin R. Heyner, 1 Oct 1975

Maj Edward F. Lincoln, Jun 1978

Col Louis Paskevicz, Sep 1978

Lt Col Louis J. Siroy, 28 Oct 1981

Lt Col Leon L. Fuer Jr., Dec 1981

Lt Col Edward Lincoln, 18 Jan-1 Oct 1982

Lt Col John M. Winslow Jr., 1 Oct 1982

Lt Col Jim L. Folsom, by Aug 1985

Lt Col Douglas A. Ohlde, Jan 1989

Lt Col John H. Taylor Jr., 30 Jun 1991

Lt Col Earl J. Guidry Jr., 1 May 1992

Lt Col Sam M. Lambert, 10 Sep 1994

Lt Col Michael Bratlien, 1 Feb 1997; Lt Col Wesley Langland, 6 Mar 1998; Col Michael K. Sumida, 6 Mar 1999; Lt Col Theodore R. Wright, 1 May 2001

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

## Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

### Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Germany, 17 Aug 1943

Germany, 11 Jan 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

12 Dec 1971-9 Apr 1972

1 Jan 1975-31 Dec 1976

1 Jan-31 Dec 1980

1 Jan 1990-31 Dec 1991

1 Jan 1998-31 Aug 1999

1 Jan 1990-31 Dec 1991; 1 Jan 1998-31 Aug 1999; 1 Jan 2001-31 Aug 2002; 1 Sep 2004-31 Aug 2006; 1 Sep 2006-2 Sep 2008.

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jan 1968-30 Sep 1972

### EMBLEM



Approved, 10 Apr 1943;



731st Tactical Airlift Squadron emblem On a disc edged with a narrow yellow border, the top half blue fimbriated yellow, the bottom half divided into seven alternating red and white stripes overall a blue globe fimbriated yellow on the blue portion of the disc, with green land masses encircled by a yellow band surmounted to dexter by a brown silhouetted eagle ascending bendwise with wings spread, head, neck and tail feathers white, detailed blue, grasping in its beak a green olive branch, each wing surmounting a white cloud formation; above the globe to sinister three yellow five pointed stars; on the dexter white stripe a brown caduceus, on the center white stripe a brown parachute and on the sinister white stripe a green disc enflamed yellow fimbriated red. Attached above the disc a blank white scroll edged yellow. Attached below the disc a white scroll edged yellow and inscribed "ETERNAL VIGILANCE" in blue letters.

The design emphasizes the many dimensions of the 731st's mission and reflects the rich historical heritage of the New England region. The eagle circling the globe symbolizes the global capability of the unit. The yellow band encircling the globe symbolizes the flight of the eagle; the color symbolizes the excellence which is the continuing goal of the squadron. The olive branch borne by the eagle represents the humanitarian missions which the squadron has and will continue to participate in. The white cloud on the blue background in the upper right symbolizes the all-weather capability of the unit. The white stars to the left are representative of night operations which are a large part of the squadron's mission. Three symbols in the lower half of the design suggest different roles in the squadron's mission. The red and white stripes which form the background represent the seven original Northeast Colonies, the area

from which the squadron's members are drawn. The winged caduceus symbolizes the unit's aeromedical evacuation mission. The parachute represents the paratroop and aerial resupply delivery capability. The circle with tongue of flame represents a flare pot, symbolic of the capability of the unit to operate from unimproved and unlighted airstrips. The legend, "Eternal Vigilance", derives from a quotation by Thomas Jefferson: "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." This legend reflects the heritage of the New England region and its place in the history of the nation.



Blue and Yellow are Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The four stars are arranged in a grouping of three and one; signifying the "thirty-first" (31st) eternally vigilant in the skies over the world. The black panther is retained from the original emblem as the predominant feature. Its redesign and streamlined shape concurs with modern Air Force standards of strength and appearance. The globe designates the world operational theater of the Air Force and is borrowed from both original and current emblems. The primary color of the globe is emerald green which not only denotes the earth's landmass, but is also our adopted squadron color. Flag blue suggests the water of the globe and is aesthetic with the surrounding border. The lines of longitude and latitude are also adopted from the original emblem but illustrated in white for clarity and contrast. The clouds surrounding the emblem are redesigned and retained for historical value. The emblem will be bordered by a single scroll below, containing the unit designation.

Azure, a demi-globe issuant from base Or gridlined Argent surmounted by an orle of clouds of the last garnished Sable supporting a panther salient Black garnished and fimbriated White; all within a diminished bordure Gules. Attached below the disc a white scroll edged with and inscribed 731st AIRLIFT SQ" in Red letters in a narrow red border. SIGNIFICANCE: Blue and yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The globe represents the unit's participation in the Air Force global reach mission. The panther reflects the unit's lineage with the World War II 331st Bombardment Squadron. (Approved, 22 Jul 1996)

## **MOTTO**

## OPERATIONS

Combat in ETO, 13 May 1943-19 Apr 1945. Trained for bombardment missions, 1947-1951. Between 1952 and 1982, trained successively for tactical reconnaissance, bombardment, and airlift operations. Worldwide airlift since 1982.



731 MAS on a mission in Moron AB, Spain loading a 34,700 lb. fire engine to be shipped to Weathersfield England for use on flightline. The crew consisted of LTC Wilmer White; Instructor Pilot Maj Franklin P. Heyner; Aircraft Commander Cpt David E. Siek; Pilot Cpt Paul Birmingham; Navigator Flight Examiners LTC George Olson and Maj Alphonse LaRosa; Navigators Maj Michael Melvin and Maj Melvin Lakutis; Flight Engineers TSgt Richard Jedrey and Robert Draper; Loadmasters TSgt Thomas Ryan and Sgt James Dixon

The 452d's separated 731 Squadron completed its move from George AFB to Iwakuni AB, Honshu, on November 20, 1950. Four crews which had left George AFB as an advance echelon on September 15 participated in combat during October, and the unit put up its first complete squadron mission on November 24, 1950.

The 731st filled a real need for General Stratemeyer. From the beginning of operations in Korea, the Air Force had been unable to attack moving targets at night. On September 6, General Vandenberg suggested that General Stratemeyer convert the 3d Group completely to night attack and assign the 731 Squadron, especially trained for low-level operations, to the under-strength 3d Group. General Stratemeyer quickly implemented this solution to his night-attack problem. During its seven-month Korean tour, the 731 flew more than 9,000 hours of combat on 2,000 combat sorties. Its missions included high-, medium-, and low-level visual and radar bombing, front-line close support, flare drops, and armed reconnaissance—all under conditions of darkness. When the 3d Bombardment Wing was brought up to full strength by the acquisition of the 90th Bombardment Squadron as a third active force unit, the 731 was inactivated at Iwakuni June 25, 1951.

The airlift portion of the squadron's mission was conducted worldwide in furtherance of the MAC mission, support of the space program and the continuing effort in Southeast Asia. The diversified cargoes carried by aircraft of the 731st included a prototype of the A-10 aircraft and

the U. S. Coast Guard's entire rowing team. 1972

Groundbreaking at Peterson for C-130 Ops Facility: Airlift units at Peterson AFB, Colo., cut sod on a 12,500-foot C-130 operations center that will soon unite the active duty 52nd Airlift Squadron and Air Force Reserve Command's 731 Airlift Squadron under one roof. Forming the nexus of the active association's shared campus, the \$5.6 million building aims to enhance cooperation and operations efficiency, allowing greater integration. Constrained by the size of the host Reserve 302nd Airlift Wing's current facilities, active duty personnel have been forced to operate from temporary facilities, sharing office and maintenance space as available. "We've seen a successful integration with our flying operations, aircraft maintenance, and in our aerial port. The only missing piece begins tomorrow with the start of construction," stated Col. Jay Pittman, 302nd AW commander. The facility's construction is slated to conclude in early 2012. The groundbreaking took place Feb. 14. 2011

A message sent on 16 February 1966, origin unclear, announced plans to convert more C-119 units to the larger C-124. Units affected were the 459th TCW; 901st, 904th, 909th, 932nd, and 945th TCGs; and the 73rd, 336th, 731, 733rd, and 756th TCSs. It's important to realize not all of these groups and squadrons were assigned to the 459th Wing. The 901st belonged to the 94th Wing, as did the 904th. The 909th belonged to the 459th Wing and would later be joined by the 911th. The 932nd Group belonged to the 442nd Wing and the 945th Group was claimed by the 452nd TCW.

Snug as Two Bug Squadrons: The 52nd Airlift Squadron and Air Force Reserve Command's 731 AS cemented their units' association at Peterson AFB, Colo., with the opening of a new, shared operations building. The 12,500 square-foot, \$5.6 million facility will host maintenance and administration for the units' 12 jointly operated C-130H airlifters, according to a Peterson release. "From day one, the 52nd AS pulled together, and since then we've been through combat together and we've been inspected together," said Col. Jay Pittman, commander of AFRC's 302nd Airlift Wing, parent unit of the 731 AS, at the facility's July 17 ribbon cutting. "This building is really going to be the icing on the cake. It's the last piece we need to look like a long-term, professional organization," added Pittman. The building's groundbreaking took place in February 2011. The 52nd AS stood up in 2009 to partner with the 302nd AW, which owns the 12 C-130s, under an active association. The squadron falls under the 19th AW at Little Rock AFB, Ark. 2012

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (AFNS) -- With a snip of the ceremonial scissors, Air Force Reserve and active duty Airmen ushered in the opening of a new total force C-130 Hercules operations facility July 17 here. The new \$5.6 million facility is the next milestone in the 302nd Airlift Wing's integration with the active duty 52nd Airlift Squadron. The 12,500-square-foot building will house both the 52nd AS and the Air Force Reserve's 731 Airlift Squadron under one roof. The two squadrons, as well as C-130 aircraft maintenance, merged under the Air Force's Total Force Integration program. Known as 'TFI,' the integration allows active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve organizations to make more efficient use of facilities, personnel and aircraft. For the 52nd AS and 302nd AW, that means performing both training and real-

world airlift and airdrop missions together as well as matching maintenance personnel to maintain the wing's 12 tactical airlift aircraft. Officiating the historic moment, leaders from both the Air Force Reserve and Air Mobility Command took center stage to cut the red ribbon. Grasping the scissors, Col. Jay Pittman, the 302nd AW commander here, and Col. Brian Robinson, the 19th AW commander from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., sliced through the ribbon, marking the official opening of the facility. Just before the ribbon cutting, Pittman stood in front of the audience, highlighting the significance of the day's event. "We've been waiting over a year for this building to be finished. It's been worth the wait and this is a fabulous facility," Pittman said. "I love talking about this TFI; I believe in it and I'm passionate about it. "From day one, the 52nd AS pulled together, and since then we've been through combat together and we've been inspected together," he said. "This building is really going to be the icing on the cake. It's the last piece we need to look like a long-term, professional organization. We used to call this (area) the Reserve campus; this is now the TFI campus." Pittman pointed out some of the highlights of the new facility, including a 200-seat auditorium, which he said was necessary for the many organizations looking for adequate space on Peterson Air Force Base. The colonel said he was also excited to see continued improvements in the area, with a newly-landscaped courtyard, lighting and a partially-covered area. "This campus is going to be the showcase of the Air Force Reserve Command and the TFI community at large," he said. Mirroring the active duty relationship with their Air Force Reserve counterparts here, Robinson also spoke highly of the TFI partnership. "I can tell you that Colonel Pittman has the same amount of enthusiasm about this project that he had over our very first phone call," Robinson said. "I just want to say thanks to all the organizations out here that have taken care of the 52nd AS. You know, I don't worry about this unit at all. Everyone here is committed to success and they're doing it right." The 52nd AS, which first activated in October 2009, has seen its share of combat deployments. The squadron has deployed several times, supporting tactical airlift and airdrop operations throughout Southwest Asia. The squadron achieved full operational capability in late 2011 as its end strength reached approximately 200 Airmen. 2012

On 29 January 2009, a C-130H, tail number (T/N) 94-7315, flew a Joint Airborne/Air Transportability Training mission over MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The mishap occurred when the mishap jumper died after parachuting from the aircraft and landing in a lake near MacDill AFB. The mishap jumper was a member of United States Special Operations Command, assignee to MacDill AFB. The aircraft was based at Peterson AFB, Colorado, and assigned to the 302d Airlift Wing. No other individuals were killed or injured in the mishap or during the rescue efforts.

The mishap jumper exited the aircraft at approximately 0916 local time as the last of 9 jumpers on the first personnel drop of the day. He landed in a lake approximately 944 yards from the north edge of the drop zone (DZ), and rescue efforts were initiated at once. After swimming for 30 to 60 seconds and before rescuers could reach him, the mishap jumper disappeared below the lake surface. After 55 minutes of searching, rescuers located the mishap jumper, began administering first aid, and transported him to the nearest hospital where his death was pronounced.

Clear and convincing evidence shows the mishap was caused by inaccurate airdrop calculations, delays in the execution of the airdrop sequence, the mishap jumper's running with the wind in descent, and the mishap jumper's failure to employ his life preserver when he made an emergency water landing. Substantial contributing factors were the failure of the Tanker DZ survey to properly identify Gadsen Lake as a water obstacle within 1000 meters of the DZ. and noncompliance with a regulation requiring a manned safety boat on this water obstacle.

Inaccurate airdrop calculations were primarily a result of using: inaccurate pre-mission information inflight and not fully accounting for changes in drop altitude, parachute type, and actual winds. Delays in the airdrop sequence were caused primarily by time compression during the operation which resulted in a green light call an estimated 4 seconds later than planned. followed by a 4 to 5 second delay in the jumpers' exit. The visual red light call was an estimated 5 to 5 seconds (482 to 719 yards) later than post-accident analysis shows it should have been called for the last jumper to have landed within the DZ boundary. The aircraft navigation computer did not serve as an effective backup to the visual call because it was programmed with inaccurate parachute and wind data

When live red light was turned on, the mishap jumper was already past the ramp hinge and continued to exit. While this is standard procedure, his exit 1 to 2 seconds after the red light added an estimated 92 to 154 yards to his travel past the DZ. Upon exit, the mishap jumper ran with the wind, contributing an additional 5 knots of forward drive over the duration of his descent and adding an estimated 314 yards to his total distance traveled. Ultimately, the mishap jumper landed an estimated 944 yards off the drop zone, it is unknown why he did not activate either side of a fully-operational life preserver while in the air or in the water, which is standard procedure for water landings.

Combat in ETO, Feb 1944-21 Apr 1945. Combat in Korea, 24 Nov 1950-24 Jun 1951.

The 3d BG conducted its first combat missions in Korea on 27 Jun 1950. Its B-26 pilots flew reconnaissance sorties and protected allied shipping in Korean waters. The next day, the group attacked rail and road targets at Munsan. A day later, the B-26s attacked Pyongyang Airfield. On July 1, the group and its squadrons moved with a forward echelon of the wing to Iwakuni AB, Japan, to be closer to Korea. Fifth Air Force exercised direct operational control of the group from July 20, 1950, later attaching it to the 6133d Bomb (later, Tactical Support) Wing. After September, the 3d BG flew mostly at night against airfields, vehicles, and railways. Hindered by a lack of light over the target areas, the group's night intruders experimented with parachute-dropped flares, wing-mounted naval searchlights, and C-47 "Lightning Bugs." The "bugs," flown by the attached 731st BS, dropped flares from low altitudes, illuminating target areas. But B-26s soon replaced the C-47s, which flew too slowly to accompany the intruders to the target area. The 3d BG moved to Korea in August 1951 to continue combat missions, receiving three Distinguished Unit Citations before the armistice in July 1953

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USAF Unit Histories  
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Sources

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