

44th DEPOT REPAIR SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

44th Depot Repair Squadron

STATIONS

Hitcham, England

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Grant W. Bowen

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Paper work at San Antonio Air Depot, Texas, officially activated the organization February 7th, 1942. Accumulation of personnel was started at Patterson Field March, 1942. The group was moved to Springfield, Illinois, April 21, 1942, for basic and technical training, and it was from this station that men were sent to the various technical schools. With the completion of the training of most of the members, the group was moved to Mobile, Alabama, for advanced basic and overseas training, as well as the practical work in the Airdrome and Tech. Supply divisions of Brookley Field.

During the training in Mobile, the 44th first had its taste of success. The civilians employed at the Depot refused to work nights and because they were afraid of losing their jobs refused to train the soldiers. The soldiers were put on the night shift and jumped production 50 percent in two weeks, and within a month, 100 per cent. The civilians decided to go back to work nights, and the strike was broken. But the 44th had earned its reputation, and had gained self-confidence and valuable training.

During the selecting necessary to get a good organization of the various skills needed in a repair squadron, many officers and enlisted men were transferred in and out. Major Bowen joined the organization 20th October 1942 as Commanding Officer, and later the additional officers assigned to the 44th were selected at Mobile--with the exception of Lts. MeMasler and Meding, who were assigned in this theatre. 1st Sgt. Jacobson was appointed in January, 1943.

The first serious accident of the Squadron occurred on 17th July, 1943, to Lt. Wallace, who was flying on a routine test flight with Major Simpson, Lt. Handley and Capt May. Lt. Wallace was badly injured, but was the only one to recover, and is now back on duty. The first death in the Squadron was that of Lt. Willis S. Schmidt, Test Pilot, on 20th October, 1943.

The Squadron initiated construction of the Fourth and Fifth Graders' Club buildings, and had a large membership in the Groups "Non-Com Clubs. A member organized the Group newspaper. "DEPO ECHO." The men have worked 18-20 hours a day for weeks on end in the hangars, where they have filtered into nearly every department with initiative, leadership and comradeship. This is ample proof that the 44th Repair Squadron has proved itself an outstanding organization.

The entire outfit left for Brisbane, Australia. There we joined up with the 81st Air Depot Group and finally took over all aircraft under modification. We had extensive work on P-38 aircraft. From there to Finschhafen, New Guinea and from there to Clark Field in the Philippines.

The 44th Depot Repair Squadron went from "Eagle Farm" at Brisbane to "Finschhafen" New Guinea. There they constructed a Major Combat Overhaul & Modification Base. They even tried to install a 75 mm cannon in a P-38. From New Guinea they went to "Clark Field" In the Philippines.

We worked around the clock for all combat ready aircraft (P-39 P-40 P-38 B-25 B-17 B-24) and Naval aircraft under our depot . . . combat overhaul, new modifications., engine changes etc. . .

We performed complete combat overhaul.

SINCE arriving in this theatre on the 14th of June, 1943, the 44th Depot Repair Squadron has taken an active part in the assembly and repair of aircraft. Having been trained in a dozen different specialists' schools in the States, plus four months' practical training in a Depot in Mobile, Alabama, the 44th was well qualified on arrival and its leaders have assumed responsibilities here in many key positions.

Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 31 Aug 2011

Updated:

Sources

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