

97 OPERATIONS GROUP



MISSION

The mission of the 97 Operations Group is to initiate Global Mobility by expertly training airlift and aerial refueling aircrews to achieve global reach and power while simultaneously maintaining worldwide deployment capabilities.

The 97 Operations Group is the home of the Air Force's only KC-135, KC-46, and C-17 formal training units (FTU), responsible for initial and upgrade aircrew training for all three weapons systems.

The group consists of the 54th Air Refueling Squadron, 56th Air Refueling Squadron, 58th Airlift Squadron, and 97 Training Squadron, which train highly capable and qualified aircrew for USAF active duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve along with 19 NATO and allied countries. The elite instructor corps provides training in specialized areas including: aerial refueling, airdrop, night vision goggle operations, low-level environments, assault zone landings as well as tactical procedures. The 97 Operations Support Squadron's airfield operations including weather, tactics, and aircrew flight equipment flights enable the daily flying operations required to accomplish student training.

All of these agencies work together, enabling the 97 Operations Group's execution of the 97 Air Mobility Wing's \$410 million dollar flying-training program.

LINEAGE

97 Bombardment Group (Heavy), established, 28 Jan 1942
Activated, 3 Feb 1942
Redesignated 97 Bombardment Group, Heavy, 30 Sep 1944
Inactivated, 29 Oct 1945
Redesignated 97 Bombardment Group, Very Heavy, 15 Jul 1946
Activated, 4 Aug 1946
Redesignated 97 Bombardment Group, Medium, 12 Jul 1948
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1952
Redesignated 97 Operations Group, 29 Aug 1991
Activated, 1 Sep 1991
Inactivated, 1 Apr 1992
Activated, 1 Oct 1992

STATIONS

MacDill Fld, FL, 3 Feb 1942
Sarasota, FL, 29 Mar-16 May 1942
Polebrook, England, 13 Jun-9 Nov 1942
Maison Blanche, Algeria, 13 Nov 1942
Tafaraoui, Algeria, 22 Nov 1942
Biskra, Algeria, 25 Dec 1942
Chateau-dun-du-Rhumel, Algeria, 8 Feb 1943
Pont-du-Fahs, Tunisia, 1 Aug 1943
Depienne, Tunisia, 15 Aug 1943
Cerignola, Italy, 20 Dec 1943
Amendola, Italy, 16 Jan 1944
Marcianise, Italy, 1-29 Oct 1945
Smoky Hill AAFld (later, Smoky Hill AFB), KS, 4 Aug 1946
Biggs AFB, TX, 17 May 1948-16 Jun 1952
Eaker AFB, AR, 1 Sep 1991-1 Apr 1992
Altus AFB, OK, 1 Oct 1992

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Mile 26 Air Field [later, Eielson AFB], AK, 2 Nov 1947-13 Mar 1948
Marham RAF Station, England, 4 Nov 1948-15 Feb 1949
Sculthorpe RAF Station, England, 26 Jul 1950-9 Feb 1951

ASSIGNMENTS

Third Air Force, 3 Feb 1942
VIII Bomber Command, 20 May 1942
XII Bomber Command, 14 Sep 1942
5 Bombardment Wing, Jan 1943-29 Oct 1945
Fifteenth Air Force, 4 Aug 1946
97 Bombardment Wing, Very Heavy (later, 97 Bombardment Wing, Medium), 1 Dec 1947-16

Jun 1952 (attached to 3 Air Division, 4 Nov 1948-15 Feb 1949 and c. 26 Jul 1950-9 Feb 1951; not operational, 10 Feb 1951-16 Jun 1952).
97 Wing, 1 Sep 1991-1 Apr 1992
97 Air Mobility Wing, 1 Oct 1992

ATTACHMENTS

Yukon Sector, Alaskan Air Command, 2-30 Nov 1947

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-17, 1942-1945
B-29, 1946-1950
B-50, 1950-1951
KB-29, 1950-1951
KC-135, 1991-1992
KC-135, 1992-1993, 1994
C-141, 1992-2001
C-5, 1992
C-17, 1996

COMMANDERS

Col Cornelius W. Cousland, Feb 1942
Col James H. Walsh, c. Jul 1942
Col Frank A. Armstrong Jr., 2 Aug 1942
Brig Gen Joseph H. Atkinson, 27 Sep 1942
Col Stanley J. Donovan, 5 Jan 1943
Col Leroy A. Rainey, 29 Jun 1943
Col Frank Allen, Nov 1943
Col Jacob E. Smart, 7 Apr 1944
Col Frank Allen, 11 May 1944
Col Elmer J. Rogers Jr., Jun 1944
Col Nils O. Ohman, 22 Aug 1944
Col William K. Kincaid, May 1945-unkn
Col Walter S. Lee, 4 Aug 1946
Lt Col William D. Bacon, 27 Aug 1946
Col William E. McDonald, 9 Oct 1946
Col George L. Robinson, 10 Sep 1947-17 Mar 1948
Unkn, C. 18 Mar 1948-May 1948
Maj Joseph A. Ryan, By May 1948-Unkn
Lt Col Paul K Blair, Unkn 1948
Col George L. Robinson, 24 Jan 1949
Col Dalene E. Bailey, 20 Apr 1949
Lt Col William H. Reddell, 1 Aug 1949
Col Dalene E. Bailey, 19 Aug 1949
Col Harvey C. Dorney, 21 Jan-9 Feb 1951

None (Not Manned), 10 Feb 1951-16 Jun 1952
Col Randall E. Wooten, 1 Sep 1991-1 Apr 1992
Col Charles L. Johnson II, 1 Oct 1992
Col Mark A. Volcheff, 21 Jun 1993
Col Quentin L. Peterson, 27 Jun 1994
Col Bradley S. Baker, 12 Aug 1996
Col Edward G. Redmon, 30 Jul 1998
Col Michelle D. Johnson, 6 Mar 2000
Col William G. Palmby, 15 Mar 2002
Col Mark C. Dillon, 7 Jul 2004

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II
Antisubmarine, American Theater
Air Offensive, Europe
Egypt-Libya
Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Anzio
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Steyr, Austria, 24 Feb 1944
Ploesti, Rumania, 18 Aug 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Oct 1992-30 Jun 1993
1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1994
1 Jul 1994-30 Jun 1995

1 Jul 1995-30 Jun 1996
1 Jul 1996-30 Jun 1998
1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 1999
1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2000
1 Jul 2000-30 Jun 2002

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Early in 1942, trained B-17 crews in Florida and flew antisubmarine patrols.

First B-17s left for UK 23 Jun 1942, flying by northern ferry route, Goose Bay, Greenland, to Prestwick. First B-17 arrived UK 1 Jul 1942. Ground echelon sailed on Queen Elizabeth 4 Jun 1942 arriving Clyde 10 Jun 1942.

Entered combat with the Eighth Air Force on 17 Aug 1942, bombing a marshalling yard at Rouen in the first mission flown by the Army Air Forces' heavy bombers based in England. Attacked airfields, marshalling yards, industries, naval installations, and other targets in France and the Low Countries. Moved in Nov 1942 to the Mediterranean theater, being assigned first to Twelfth and later (Nov 1943) to Fifteenth Air Force. From Nov 1942 through May 1943, struck shipping in the Mediterranean Sea and airfields, docks, harbors, and marshalling yards in north Africa, southern France, Sardinia, Sicily, and the southern Italian mainland in a campaign to cut supply lines to German forces in north Africa. Helped force the capitulation of Pantelleria Island in Jun 1943.

Bombed in preparation for and in support of the invasions of Sicily and southern Italy in the summer and fall of 1943. From Nov 1943 to Apr 1945, attacked targets in Italy, France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Greece, attacking oil

refineries, marshalling yards, aircraft factories, and other strategic objectives. Earned a Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for leading a raid against an aircraft factory at Steyr on 24 Feb 1944 during Big Week, the intensive air campaign against the German aircraft industry. Participated in first shuttle-bombing mission to Russia (Operation Frantic) in June 1944. The group earned a second DUC for a devastating raid against one of the Ploesti oil refineries in Rumania on 18 Aug 1944.

Supported Allied forces at Anzio and Cassino by pounding enemy communications, transportation targets, and airfields. Bombed coastal defenses in preparation for the invasion of southern France. Assisted the American Fifth and British Eighth Armies in their advance through the Po Valley of northern Italy until the German surrender in May 1945.

Beginning in 1946, trained as a Strategic Air Command bombardment group, participating in numerous exercises, operational readiness inspections, and overseas deployments. Deployed to northern Alaska in 1947-1948.

Deployed twice to the United Kingdom. Unmanned from 10 Feb 1951 to 16 Jun 1952.

Between Sep 1991 and Apr 1992, flew aerial refueling missions for the Strategic Air Command. Between Oct 1992 and Jul 1993, flew strategic airlift and aerial refueling training missions for Air Mobility Command. After 1 Jul 1993, supported Air Education and Training Command by training flying crews with strategic airlift and air refueling aircraft.

USAF UNIT HISTORIES
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Sources

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