

327th AIRDROME SQUADRON

MISSION

LINEAGE

327th Airdrome Squadron activated, 20 April 1944

STATIONS

Lakeland AAF, Lakeland FL

Kalaikunda

Bombay, India

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 327th Airdrome Squadron was activated April 20, 1944, at Lakeland Air Force Base, Lakeland Florida. Squadron life began on April 26, 1944, with the arrival of forty-one enlisted men and Chief Warrant Officer Carl Whalen, Jr., who temporarily assumed command. The new

organization was assigned to the Second Air Commando Group. Captain Tyler Slocumb, designated Squadron Commander, assumed command May 5, 1944.

By the end of May the squadron was shaken down and replacements obtained in most sections. Squadron strength on May 31st was seven officers and two hundred fifteen enlisted men. In addition, the squadron was charged with the responsibility of quartering, rationing, and supplying the personnel of Group Headquarters and the First Fighter Squadron.

The 327th Airdrome Squadron completed its training in Florida and proceeded to Kalaikunda, India, as part of the Second Air Commando Group.

One of the main functions of the squadron in January 1945, was to establish and maintain a Group Motor Pool. Details were sent to Calcutta to obtain vehicles and to convoy them to Kalaikunda.

The planes began to arrive daily in January and the flight line hummed with activity. Mechanics, radio men, ordnance, and armament men swarmed over the planes making acceptance checks and installing additional equipment required for combat.

During the first few days of February, 1945, Major Slocumb, Captain Lurie and Lieutenant Plumb together with thirty enlisted men departed from Kalaikunda, India, and proceeded to Cox's Bazaar, India, as an advance detail to prepare the new base for the remainder of the organization. On this same day six enlisted men left Kalaikunda for Calcutta. The purpose of this detail was to procure additional trucks and an ambulance which were then to be driven to Cox's Bazaar, India.

At approximately 0900 on 4 February 1945, the remainder of the squadron, consisting of four officers and one hundred twenty-three enlisted men and six enlisted men assigned to the 328th Airdrome Squadron and attached to this squadron for duty, departed from Kalaikunda with all necessary equipment, in C-46s and C-47s. At 1115 this date, we arrived at our destination Cox's Bazaar, India, and proceeded to set up all squadron facilities.

During the first ten days at this advanced base, the squadron busied itself setting up the Mess Hall and other needed operation. Parking ramps for our planes were constructed in the interim.

Morale was boosted considerably when our parent organization, of which we form a vital factor, the First Provisional. Fighter Group, received its first commendation since operations were begun. This commendation was received from Major General Evans, Commanding General, Seventh Indian Division, for air support rendered 14 February, 1945. This was our first combat mission and our fighters participated in operations on both opening days of the Nyaungu campaign and the crossing of the Irrawaddy.

During one of the P-51 raids over Burma, the pilots brought back two damaged P-51s. One had damage to the fuselage and couldn't be flown again. The second had wing damage and was

unflyable. Some of the sergeants (Dempsey and Stanach to name a couple) asked to take the two P-51s and take the good wings and good fuselage and make one flyable plane. At first the word was that - that was sub-depot work and not ours. There was no way of getting them out of Cox's Bazaar so Dempsey and the others talked to Lt. Peter T. Gilliam, our engineering officer, and he said "Go to it." In a short time, we had a P-51 flying again.

Another time, we had a P-51 damaged and it landed at Akyab, Burma. It seemed the engine had lost oil pressure. A bullet hole in the reduction gear housing had caused the lost oil. Sgt. John M. Howard and his line crew were ordered to fly to Akyab and pull an engine change to recover the plane. As Sgt. William H. Dempsey was our propeller specialist and had all he could handle at Cox's Bazaar, he told Lt. Peter Gilliam that I could handle the propeller change as I had been his helper even back in the states. So, we were flown to Akyab and changed the engine and the P-51 returned to Cox's Bazaar.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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