

# **328<sup>th</sup> AIRDROME SQUADRON**

## **MISSION**

## **LINEAGE**

328<sup>th</sup> Airdrome Squadron  
Activated, 22 Apr 1944

## **STATIONS**

Drew AAF, FL  
Bombay, India  
Kalaikunda

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **COMMANDERS**

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

The 328th Airdrome Squadron was activated on 20 April, 1944, and its life began at Lakeland Army Air Field, Lakeland, Florida, on 26 April, 1944, with the arrival of a cadre of nine enlisted men and 2nd Lt. Roy D. Clementsen, who temporarily assumed command. The new organization was assigned to the Second Air Commando Group which subsequently established headquarters at Lakeland Army Air Field.

From 27 April, 1944, through the first two weeks in May, personnel streamed into the squadron until there existed a sizable over strength of enlisted men. Meanwhile, additional officers assigned to the unit arrived and 3 May, 1944, Captain John H. Goodwin, assumed command of the Squadron.

The 328th trained in Florida, was part of the Second Air Commando Group that entrained at Tampa, Florida for Camp Anza, California, and went on the long boat ride from Los Angeles to Bombay. Kalaikunda, India, was the final destination.

In January, 1945, seven enlisted men along with others in the group were detailed to perform assembly work on planes that had just arrived. The squadron area involving tents and buildings began to improve. The Orderly Room had a map room added for informing the men of the changes in different zones of combat. News bulletins and changes in fighting lines were posted daily. January was the busiest month the squadron experienced so far. This month contained lots of hard work for each and every officer and enlisted man in the 328th Airdrome Squadron.

While a good deal of it pertained directly to our individual specialties, much was "above and beyond the call" involving the lighting of our tent areas and the installing of Squadron owned radios and receivers for the entertainment of the enlisted men.

Great steps were also taken in preparation for the coming monsoon season. Clouds of cement dust and puddles of muddy water which had prevailed for the latter two weeks of the month developed into cement floors and walks in the squadron tent areas. The mess hall area received similar treatment and now chow lines will be sans the inevitable mud thanks to our improvising construction engineers.

The project of manufacturing and installing a Group Laundry was also undertaken and completed during the month. The ingenious use of fifty-five gallon oil drums provided the tub in the washing machine, with reconverted, salvaged aircraft engine crankshafts as the drive shafts. When assembled, they gave one the impression that he was looking at a reasonably accurate facsimile of a washing machine. Not a Whirlpool, but perhaps, a second hand Maytag. In actual operation the machines compared with any commercial model.

Obtaining water other than from the already over-taxed Base facilities was a big problem. A stream was found about two miles from the laundry site. It was necessary to dam the stream to form a reservoir so that water could be pumped from the stream to the laundry. A pumping

machine was obtained and a pipe line was laid from the stream to the laundry, capable of furnishing approximately six thousand gallons of water per hour.

Personnel continued to shuttle back and forth between Kalaikunda and Cox's Bazaar, India, providing the necessary supplementary aid called for by the units in the forward area. Those of us in the rear area continued to receive and ship all the necessary supplies and equipment to the forward area that was requested.

The Engineering, Communication, Armament and Ordnance Sections on the line were kept busy modifying and inspecting new aircraft and also inspecting and making the major repairs on planes returned from the forward area. A twenty-four hour schedule was maintained on the line at all times when there were aircraft to be worked on so that the planes could be returned to the forward area as soon as possible for operation.

Plans were formulated to weatherproof the squadron areas of the organizations that were at the forward base.

The hot weather continued on its relentless way. Entertainment was on the upgrade with better pictures and Orientation lectures each week.

The Group G-2, Major Mallen, returned from the forward areas to give those of us at the rear base a blow by blow description of action encountered in Burma. The Major commended those of us in the rear area for our efforts and promised the rotation of all personnel, thereby eventually insuring everyone of getting a chance to take a crack at the Japs.

The strength of the organization on 28 February, 1945, was seven officers and 180 enlisted men. In March the "Big Blow" hit one night just after we were fairly well settled. Many stories have been told about the storm. Our most vivid recall is the tent suddenly collapsing in the early morning hours despite desperate attempts to hold it up. It seemed that the 328th was part of the US Navy - without ships. On this night the tornado destroyed one hundred sixty planes and gliders. Ralph Brennerman was in a tent with Sergeants McGann and Lennertz. "We held on for dear life; I had an infected nose and had used my helmet to heat water. When the storm struck, I couldn't find my helmet liner so had to put the metal helmet on. Hail as big as golf balls came down, and when they hit that metal helmet, the sound was terrific. Several men were killed by this storm. Most of them had moved into native bashas instead of pitching tents. The bashas were destroyed."

Cox's Bazaar on the Bay of Bengal was the next operations base. During the spring and early summer of 1945, the 328th mechanics, armorers, ordnance and radio men, cooks, etc., worked with the Second Fighter Squadron on all combat missions from there. Unofficial combat missions during this period included "discussions" with our British friends concerning seats in our movie theater as well as construction of individualized latrine seats for our "cousins".

Returning to Kalaikunda after onset of the monsoons and heat of early summer, the 328th was involved in housekeeping and maintenance activities until August and the end of WWII. The Squadron began to break up as some troops were transferred to other units and the luckier ones began processing for return to Uncle Sugar.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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