

## 374<sup>th</sup> OPERATIONS GROUP



### MISSION

Maintains a forward presence by providing rapid responsive movement of personnel, equipment and operational support in the Asia-Pacific region. Ensures the combat readiness of three operational squadrons using C-130J, C-12J and UH-1N aircraft. Conducts three distinct missions; intratheater airlift, aeromedical evacuation and distinguished visitor transport for U.S. Pacific Command and other agencies in support of national security policy.

### LINEAGE

374<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group established, 7 Nov 1942  
Activated, 12 Nov 1942  
Inactivated, 15 May 1946  
Activated, 15 Oct 1946  
Redesignated 374<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, Heavy, 21 May 1948  
Inactivated, 18 Nov 1958  
Redesignated 374<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Group, 31 Jul 1985  
Redesignated 374<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 1 Apr 1992  
Activated, 1 Apr 1992

### STATIONS

Brisbane, Australia, 12 Nov 1942  
Port Moresby, New Guinea, Dec 1942  
Townsville, Australia, 7 Oct 1943  
Nadzab, New Guinea, 1 Sep 1944  
Biak, Netherlands East Indies, 14 Oct 1944  
Nielson Field, Luzon, 28 May 1945-15 May 1946

Nichols Field, Luzon, 15 Oct 1946  
Harmon Field (later, AFB), Guam, 1 Apr 1947  
Tachikawa AFB (later, AB), Japan, 5 Mar 1949-18 Nov 1958  
Yokota AB, Japan, 1 Apr 1992

### **DEPLOYED STATIONS**

Ashiya AB, Japan, 15 Sep-17 Dec 1950

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

V Air Force Service Command, 12 Nov 1942  
54<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 26 May 1943  
Fifth Air Force, 28 Sep 1943  
Far East Air Forces (Provisional), 15 Jun 1944  
5298<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing (Provisional), 3 Oct 1944  
322<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 30 Dec 1944  
54<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 26 Jan-15 May 1946  
United States Army Forces, Pacific, 15 Oct 1946  
Pacific Air Service Command, United States Army (later, Far East Air Material Command), 15 Dec 1946  
Thirteenth Air Force, 20 Feb 1947  
Philippine Air Material Area, (Provisional), 25 Mar 1947  
Twentieth Air Force, 1 Apr 1947  
Marianas Air Material Area (Provisional), 1 Sep 1947  
374<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 17 Aug 1948  
1503<sup>rd</sup> Air Transport Wing, 1 Jul 1957-18 Nov 1958  
374<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 1 Apr 1992

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Directorate of Air Transport, Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area [DAT, AAFSWPA], 12 Nov-Dec 1942; Advance Echelon, Fifth Air Force, Dec 1942-25 May 1943)  
DAT, AAFSWPA, 28 Sep 1943-31 Aug 1944  
54<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 1 Sep 1944-5 Jan 1945  
Pacific Air Service Command, United States Army, 15 Oct-14 Dec 1946  
Philippine Air Material Area [Provisional], 1 Feb 1947-24 Mar 1947  
Twentieth Air Force, 1 Sep 1947-16 Aug 1948

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-18

***B-17 1942-1943***

C-39, 1942-1943

C-47, 1942-1946

C-49, 1942-1943

C-50, 1942-1943

C-53, 1942-1943

C-56, 1942  
C-59, 1942  
C-60, 1942-1943  
DC-2, 1942  
DC-3, 1942  
DC-5, 1942  
LB-30, 1942-1943  
LC-1, 1942-1943  
O-49, 1942  
Tiger Moth, 1942-1943  
C-46, 1945-1947, 1949, 1952-1953  
C-54, 1946-1947, 1947-1956  
C-119, 1951  
C-124, 1952-1956, 1957-1958  
VB-17, 1951  
C-9, 1992  
C-12, 1992  
C-21, 1992  
C-130, 1992  
UH-1N, 1992

#### **COMMANDERS**

LTC Erickson S. Nichols, 12 Nov 1942  
Maj Edgar H. Hampton, 14 Dec 1942  
Col Paul H. Prentiss, 17 Dec 1942  
Maj Fred M. Adams, 22 May 1943  
LTC Edgar H. Hampton, 12 Jul 1942  
LTC Fred M. Adams, 2 Aug 1943  
Col Edward T. Imparato, 3 Aug 1944  
Col John L. Sullivan, Oct 1945-15 May 1946  
Col Audrin R. Walker, 15 Oct 1946-31 Jan 1947  
None (not manned), 1 Feb-31 Aug 1947  
LTC Forrest H. Koons, 1 Sep 1947  
Col Charles K. Moore, 1 Mar 1948  
LTC William R. Calhoun Jr., 23 Jun 1948  
Col Troy W. Crawford, by Mar 1949  
LTC Benjamin M. Tarver Jr., Aug 1949  
Col Herbert A. Bott, 22 Jul 1950  
Col Charles W. Howe, Jul 1951  
Col Edward H. Nigro, Sep 1951  
LTC James F. Hogan, 20 Apr 1952  
Col Edward H. Nigro, 26 Aug 1952  
LTC Frederick C. Johnson, 11 Nov 1952  
LTC Howard P. Dixon, 19 Dec 1952

LTC Frederick C. Johnson, c. Jan 1953  
Col Francis W. Williams, 24 Apr 1953  
Col Hollis B. Tara, 15 Jun 1954  
Col Guy Cooke Jr., 3 Feb 1956 (additional duty only through 30 Jun 1957, full time thereafter)  
LTC John J. Scott, 6 Jun 1958 (additional duty only after 8 Jul 1958)  
Col William G. Forwood, 28 Jul-18 Nov 1958 (additional duty only)  
Col Ross P. Van Lerberghe, 1 Apr 1992  
LTC Robert M. McCarthy, 1 Jun 1993  
Col James B. Engle, 30 Jul 1993  
Col Stephen D. Brown, 9 Jun 1995  
Col Winfield W. Scott III, 25 Aug 1997  
Col Curtis L. Ross, Aug 1999

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

None

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

Papua

New Guinea

Northern Solomons

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon

Southern Philippines

Korea

UN Defensive

UN Offensive

CCF Intervention

First UN Counteroffensive

CCF Spring Offensive

UN Summer-Fall Offensive

Second Korean Winter

Korea, Summer-Fall 1952

Third Korean Winter

Korea, Summer 1953

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

## **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

Distinguished Unit Citations

Papua, 12 Nov-22 Dec 1942

Papua, [Nov] 1942-23 Jan 1943

Wau, New Guinea, 30 Jan-1 Feb 1943

Korea, 27 Jun-15 Sep 1950

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

30 Sep 1992-1 Oct 1994

1 Oct 1994-30 Sep 1996

1 Oct 1996-30 Sep 1997

1 Oct 1998-30 Sep 2000

1 Oct 2000-30 Sep 2002

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation

1 Jul 1951-27 Jul 1953.

## **EMBLEM**

Per bend azure and or, in chief a hand coupled in armour, holding a dagger, point upward, issuing from its handle an arrow and a wheat stalk or, in base a winged foot azure. (Approved, 3 Jul 1951)

## **MOTTO**

CELERITER PUGNARE--Swiftly to Fight

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Although the 374th Troop Carrier Group as such was not activated until 21 November, 1942, elements of what later became the 374th began operations in Australia early in January 1942. The forerunner of the 374th, designated as the Air Transport Command, was activated on 28 January 1942, at Amberley Field, Queensland, Australia. Upon activation, the organization had only 14 officers and 19 enlisted men. For more than two months after it was activated, the Air Transport Command had only eight enlisted personnel available for maintenance. Working on a 24 hour basis, however, each man putting in an average of 17 and 18 hours a day, all six available aircraft were kept flying.

During the latter part of January and the early part of February, 1942, equipment was flown to bases in Java by Air Transport Command aircraft. Late in February, when the Netherlands East Indies were falling before the onslaught of superior Japanese forces, Air Transport Command aircraft participated in the evacuation of military and civilian personnel. Between January and July,

1942, the Air Transport Command flew more than 5,000,000 miles rushing supplies to strategic points on the Southwest Pacific front.

The Air Transport Command, Archerfield, Brisbane, was redesignated the 21st Transport Squadron and assigned to Headquarters, Air Transport Command, Melbourne, Victoria, on 3 April, 1942. The same order activated the 22nd Transport Squadron and based them at Essendon Airdrome, Melbourne. The strength of the 21st and 22nd Squadrons was soon increased with the addition of veteran bombardment and pursuit pilots from the Philippine and Java Campaigns and a cadre of enlisted men from the United States.

On the 12th of November, 1942, the 374th Troop Carrier Group was activated with Lieutenant Colonel Erickson S. Nichols as its Commanding Officer. The 6th, 21st, 22nd, and 33rd Squadrons were assigned to the newly formed Group.

By the end of February 1943, the Group was operating in its entirety from Port Moresby under the immediate jurisdiction of the Advance Echelon, Fifth Air Force. Early days in New Guinea were attended by many discomforts. From November 1942, to the middle of February 1943, night raids by enemy bombers were all too frequent. It was not until the middle of March 1943 that the customary diet of bully beef was varied with an occasional meal of fresh meat.

When the air strip at Wau was threatened by a new Japanese offensive late in January 1943, aircraft of the 374th flew in men and supplies which stopped the Japs just short of their goal. Several planes received bullet holes when they landed as fighting was in progress on the field. The task of the 374th after the middle of February 1943, was to move personnel and supplies in three principle directions: first, to Dobodura where a large base was being constructed; second, to Wau and Bulolo where Allied Forces advancing on Lae and Salamaua had their rear bases; and third, to the patrols skirting Lae and Salamaua by dropping supplies.

During the Lae Campaign which started in September of 1943, aircraft of the 374th played a leading part. In fact flights of our C-47s were the first planes to land at Nadzab and Lae Airdromes. On 1 October 1943 the Group was given respite from combat flying and was transferred back to the mainland. The 21st Squadron was assigned to Brisbane and the 6th, 22nd and 33rd Squadrons and Group Headquarters were assigned to Townsville. The movement was entirely by air and was completed by 7 October 1943. There, the Group was placed under the operational control of the Directorate of Air Transport, Allied Air Forces.

Immediately upon its arrival on the mainland of Australia, the Group settled down to the accomplishment of its mission of maintaining an uninterrupted flow of men, supplies, and equipment to units in Australia and in the New Guinea area. In April of 1944 the 33rd Squadron moved back to Port Moresby after a six months stay at Townsville. The 33rd still continued under the operational control of D.A.T. Late in August 1944, the 6th Squadron, 21st Squadron, and Group Headquarters moved to Nadzab and were placed under operational control of the 54th Troop Carrier Wing. At the same time the 22nd Squadron moved to Finschhafen where the squadron operated under the control of D.A.T.

During its long service in the Southwest Pacific the 374th Troop Carrier Group has received two Presidential Citations.

From Oct 1946-Apr 1947, it provided troop carrier and air courier services and participated in joint maneuvers in the Pacific.

When the Korean War began in June 1950, the 374th TCG controlled the 6th and 22d Squadrons based in Japan and equipped with C-54s, and the 21st Squadron based in the Philippines and equipped with C-47s and C-54s. Within 12 hours of the North Korean attack, the group began transporting cargo to Korea and evacuating personnel on return trips. The 374th TCG moved personnel, equipment, ammunition, gasoline, rockets, rations, water, medical items, barbed wire, guns, and other materials from Japan to Suwon and Pusan, South Korea, to supply the U.S. Army. The 21st TCS moved to Japan on June 29 to come under control of FEAF Combat Cargo Command. Between mid-September and mid-December 1950, the group operated mostly from Ashiya AB, Japan; then from October 23 to November 12, it operated from bases in Korea, landing war essentials and other cargo at various small forward airstrips near UN fighting forces. A C-47-equipped squadron of the Royal Thailand Air Force operated with the 374th TCG during this period. After moving back to Tachikawa AB, Japan, in mid-December, the group continued to airlift supplies and personnel in support of UN action in Korea. The 6th and 22d TCSs transitioned from C-54s to C-124s in mid-1952. In Operation Little Switch, the 374th transported the first group of repatriated prisoners of war from Korea to Japan in April 1953, and after the cease-fire, in Operation Big Switch, it airlifted UN personnel who had been the enemy's prisoners.

Beginning in Jan 1954, the 374th airlifted wounded French troops from Indo-China to Japan, en route to France.

Principal operations from 1955 until 1958 consisted of numerous mobility exercises, routine theater airlift, and occasional exercises throughout the Western Pacific region.

Activated as an Operations Group under the objective wing structure in Apr 1992, the group gained control over the 374th Airlift Wing's operational squadrons.

From 1992 to present, the 374th Operation Group's assigned squadrons conducted special operations, aeromedical evacuations, search and rescue operations, humanitarian relief and theater airlift missions in support of US and United Nations security interests throughout the Far East.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Updated:

Sources

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

*374 Troop Carrier Group, 1942-1945*. Edward T. Imparato. Turner Publishing Co. Paducah, KY. 1998.