

## 459<sup>th</sup> AIRLIFT SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

459<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 1 Jul 1942

Activated, 6 Jul 1942

Inactivated, 1 Apr 1944

Redesignated 459<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy and activated, 1 Apr 1944

Inactivated, 21 Dec 1945

Redesignated 459<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 26 May 1952

Activated in the Reserve, 14 Jun 1952

Inactivated, 14 Jul 1952

Redesignated 459<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, and activated, 12 Oct 1966

Organized, 1 Jan 1967

Redesignated 459<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Aug 1967

Inactivated, 1 Jun 1970

1400<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron designated and activated, 1 Apr 1975

459<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron and 1400<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Squadron consolidated, 1 Dec 1991

Redesignated 459<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, 1 Dec 1991

Inactivated, 1 Oct 1993

Activated, 1 Oct 1993

### STATIONS

Salt Lake City AAB, UT, 6 Jul 1942

Alamogordo, NM, 1 Aug 1942

Biggs Field, TX, 2 Sep 1942  
Alamogordo, NM, 29 Nov 1942  
Biggs Field, TX, 5 Apr 1943-1 Apr 1944  
Walker AAFld, KS, 1 Apr 1944  
Dalhart AAFld, TX, 25 May 1944  
Walker AAFld, KS, 1 Aug 1944-7 Jan 1945  
North Field, Guam, 18 Feb-19 Nov 1945  
Camp Anza, CA, c. 18-21 Dec 1945  
Greater Pittsburgh Aprt, PA, 14 Jun-14 Jul 1952  
Phu Cat AB, Vietnam, 1 Jan 1967- 1 Jun 1970  
Norton AFB, CA, 1 Apr 1975  
March AFB, CA, 15 Oct 1992- 1 Oct 1993  
Yokota AB, Japan, 1 Oct 1993

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

330<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 6 Jul 1942-1 Apr 1944  
330<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 1 Apr 1944-21 Dec 1945  
330<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 14 Jun-14 Jul 1952  
Pacific Air Forces, 12 Oct 1966  
483<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier (later, 483<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift) Wing, 1 Jan 1967-1 Jun 1970  
89<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing (later, 89<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Group) 1 Apr 1975  
375<sup>th</sup> Aeromedical (later, 375<sup>th</sup> Military) Airlift Wing, 15 Mar 1978  
375<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 1 Dec 1991  
22<sup>nd</sup> Operations Group, 1 Apr-1 Oct 1993  
374<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, 1 Oct 1993

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

B-17, 1942  
B-24, 1942-1944  
B-17, 1944  
B-24D  
B-24E  
B-29A  
B-17E  
B-29, 1944-1945  
C-7, 1967- 1970  
CT-39, 1975-1985  
C-12, 1984  
C-21, 1985

### **COMMANDERS**

Cpt Harris K. McCauley, 1942-unkn  
Cpt Campbell, unkn-1 Jun 1943  
Cpt DeBord, 1 Jun 1943-unkn

2Lt Sol I. Lobe, 30 May 1944  
Cpt Tullie W. Cato, c. 6 Jun 1944  
LTC Robert W. Ryder, 1 Aug 1944  
Maj Frank J. Rinehart, 18 Aug 1945  
Cpt Dennie R. Curtis, 30 Oct 1945  
1Lt Sol I. Lobe, 15 Nov 1945-unkn  
Unkn, 14 Jun-14 Jul 1952  
LTC Edward J. Thielen, 1 Jan 1967  
LTC David P. Hopwood, 24 Aug 1967  
LTC James K. Secrest, 1 May 1968;  
LTC John Kozey Jr., Aug 1968  
LTC Arthur T. Rossing, c. Jul 1969  
LTC Russell C. Draper, 13 Mar 1970-unkn  
LTC Everett A. Cheney, 1 Apr 1975  
LTC Bert E. Grigsby, c. Jul 1976  
LTC Anthony A. Vanagas, 19 Jun 1978  
LTC Neil Sorenson, 14 Aug 1980  
LTC Geoffrey R. Hickman, 1 Dec 1981  
LTC James H. White, 25 Nov 1983  
LTC James M. Murphy, 14 Mar 1984  
LTC Lester H. Ideker Jr., 3 Oct 1986  
LTC Eric B. House II, 16 Sep 1988  
LTC Richard A. Mallahan, 30 May 1990  
LTC William R. Short, 10 Jun 1992-unkn  
Unkn-16 Apr 1995  
LTC Thomas S. Kingsley, 17 Apr 1995  
LTC Jeffery A. Worthing, 5 Sep 1996  
LTC John C. McKoy, 7 May 1998  
LTC Walter Leach, c. 2000  
LTC Christopher R. Valle, 16 Apr 2002  
LTC Michael Smith, 8 Jun 2004  
LTC Thad A. Hunkins, 19 Jun 2006

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

World War II

American Theater

### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II

Air Offensive, Japan

Western Pacific

Vietnam

Vietnam Air Offensive  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III  
Vietnam Air/Ground  
Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV  
TET 69/Counteroffensive  
Vietnam Summer-Fall, 1969  
Vietnam Winter-Spring, 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

### **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations  
Japan, 3-9 Jul 1945  
Tokyo, Japan, 8 Aug 1945

Presidential Unit Citations (Southeast Asia)  
1 Jan-12 May 1968  
1 Apr-31 May 1970

Presidential Unit Citation (Navy)  
Khe Sanh, 20 Jan-31 Mar 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device  
1 Jan-30 Apr 1967  
1 May 1967-30 Apr 1968

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards  
1 Jul- 31 Dec 1975  
1 Jan 1976-31 Jan 1977  
1 Jul 1981-30 Jun 1983  
1 Jun 1986-31 Jul 1988  
1 Jul-1 Oct 1993  
[1 Oct 1993]-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  
1 Oct 2003-30 Sep 2005

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

1 Jan 1967-30 Jun 1970

### **EMBLEM**

On a light turquoise blue disc, border red, piped white, a red centaur having gold tail, white face, and gray hoofs, wearing a red helmet, winged gold, and gray gloves, reared up on hind legs on white cloud formation in base, facing toward sinister, and shooting a jagged, gold lightning bolt affixed to bow string of curved bow of the last, all beneath a white cloud formation in dexter chief and flecked with white, five-point stars. (Approved, 9 Apr 1945)



On a Blue disc edged with a narrow Red border a White undulating aerodynamic shape fesswise throughout between in base a Yellow sun emitting seven Yellow rays and in the top of the disc a constellation of ten White stars palewise four, three, two and one, overall five contrails bendwise, Red, White, Blue, White, Red, terminating at a White aircraft ascending bendwise garnished Black. (Approved, 10 Jun 1982)

### **MOTTO**

### **NICKNAME**

### **OPERATIONS**

Replacement training, 1942-1944. Combat in Western Pacific, c. 12 Apr-14 Aug 1945. Intratheater airlift in Southeast Asia, Jan 1967-May 1970.

The 459th Troop Carrier Squadron was formed from the former Army 92nd Aviation Company at Qui Nhon on 1 January 1967. The squadron was initially based at Phu Cat, with Detachments of 5 aircraft at Da Nang and 4 Aircraft at Pleiku.

3 August 1967 C-7B 62-4161

Crew: Capt Alan Eugene Hendrickson (KIA)

Capt John Dudley Wiley (KIA)

TSgt Zane Aubry Carter (KIA)

Three airmen died in a tragic friendly fire incident on 3 August. A C-7 Caribou was approaching the Duc Pho Special Forces camp, about 20 miles south of Quang Ngai, when it was hit by a shell from a US Army 155mm howitzer. The aircraft had flown into the line of fire and the shell blew off its entire rear fuselage and tail section. There is a well-publicized photograph of the aircraft taken during its fatal dive into the ground on the outskirts of the camp. Following this accident the Army and Air Force tightened up their coordination procedures for air operations near artillery fire zones.

1 March 1969 C-7B 63-9762

3 crew, names unknown (survived)

A C-7 Caribou was damaged beyond repair when it landed short of the runway due to pilot error.

26 December 1969 C-7B 63-9723

1Lt David Bicknel Bowling (KIA)

1Lt R J Patterson (survived)

TSgt E J Welch (KIA)

A Caribou was hit by small arms fire as it approached Tien Phuoc, west of Tam Ky during a cargo flight from Phu Cat. The pilot, 1Lt Bowling, was shot through the heart and the aircraft crashed inverted into a rice paddy near the village of Phuoc An. Although the co-pilot survived, the flight mechanic, TSgt Welch, was crushed to death by the cargo when it broke loose on impact.

9 June 1970 C-7B 63-9724

Unit: 459 TAS, 483 TAW

A C-7 Caribou was being airlifted by a CH-54 Skycrane helicopter when it fell from the sling and was destroyed. The aircraft had run off the end of the runway as it was landing at a strip at Tra Bong in May 1970. None of the crew was injured in the crash and it was decided to airlift the Caribou out for repair. The propellers and outboard wing sections were removed before the airlift was attempted. The Caribou was one of the largest aircraft that could be lifted by heavy lift helicopters but unfortunately on this occasion the sling snapped and the aircraft fell to the ground breaking in two.

Airlift of key Department of Defense personnel, Apr 1975-Mar 1978; aeromedical airlift, Mar 1978-Nov 1991; operational support airlift, Dec 1991.

As MAC had consolidated its aeromedical airlift mission under the 375 AAW, it also took steps in 1975, to consolidate its operational support airlift (OSA) mission—the time sensitive transport of government officials, military leaders, and/or important cargo. On 1 April 1975, MAC consolidated its newly acquired fleet of 106 Rockwell T-39A Sabreliners under an Administrative Airlift Division; activating three OSA squadrons; the 1400th Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) at Norton AFB, California, the 1401st Military Airlift Squadron, at Scott AFB, Illinois, and the 1402nd Military Airlift Squadron at Andrews AFB, Maryland.

1400th Military 1401st Military 1402nd Military Operational support airlift missions were also considered pilot training missions, until after the Air Force OSA mission reevaluation in 1977; after that, pilot training became only a by-product. In reflection of that change, the T-39As were redesignated as CT-39A

On 15 March 1978, MAC realigned the three squadrons (1400, 1401, 1402) and twelve detachments, dispersed across 15 locations, to the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing and gave the Wing management and operational control responsibilities for the OSA mission within the continental United States. This was a significant addition to the Wing's mission. In 1978 alone, the Wing's newly acquired fleet of 104 Sabreliners flew 92,000 hours in support OSA missions.

Yokota Deploys C-12 The 459th Airlift Squadron at Yokota AB, Japan, last fall deployed, for the first time, one of its newly acquired C-12J turboprops to the Philippines under Operation Enduring Freedom. The Yokota team flew nearly 265 hours, transporting 552 passengers and more than 57,000 pounds of cargo over the two-month deployment. Just last summer, the 459th AS traded its C-21 small transport jets for C-12J turboprops in a not quite even swap—four for three. The base had flown the C-21 for 21 years. The Air Force made the switch because the C-12s can haul more and land at some fields inaccessible to the sleek C-21. 2008

C-12 Pilots Support SOF Deployment A group of C-12J transports assigned to the 459th Airlift Squadron, Yokota AB, Japan, completed a deployment for Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, transporting cargo and personnel for the special operations mission aiding the Philippine military's anti-terror efforts. The aircraft and crews frequently operated from rural runways, many no more than 4,000 feet long and lacking navigational aids and control towers. During the course of the four-month deployment, the team from Yokota flew nearly 265 hours, transporting 552 passengers and more than 57,000 pounds of cargo. The deployment was the first for Yokota's prop-driven C-12s, which had arrived in July 2007 to replace the unit's C-21s. 2008

UH-1N helicopter pilots at Yokota AB, Japan, recently hosted their Japanese Ground Self Defense Force counterparts on a fly-along interoperability sortie. "The objective for this is to help introduce [the JGSDF] to our procedures and how we fly our helicopters and help us understand how they fly theirs," said Capt. Thomas Powell, 459th Airlift Squadron operations boss at Yokota, in a Feb. 5 release. JGSDF operates similar UH-1 helicopters from neighboring Camp Higashi-Tachikawa, west of Tokyo. "The big thing is to get the terminology correct between the two of us" in the event that the neighboring units need to cooperate on disaster relief, humanitarian, or military missions, Powell said. "For us, it was extremely helpful to have a clear understanding of the tactics and equipment ... and how they differ from ours," said JGSDF pilot Capt. Fujimoto. A pair of USAF UH-1Ns demonstrated various formations and maneuvers during the Jan. 29 sortie. 2015

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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.

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.