

491 ATTACK SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

79 Aero Squadron, 15 Aug 1917

Redesignated 491 Aero Squadron, 1 Feb 1918

Demobilized, 31 Jan 1919

491 Bombardment Squadron constituted and allotted to the reserve, 31 Mar 1924

491 Aero Squadron reconstituted and consolidated with 491 Bombardment Squadron, 1936.
Consolidated organization designated 491 Bombardment Squadron.

Disbanded, 31 May 1942

491 Bombardment Squadron (Medium) constituted, 14 Aug 1942

Activated, 15 Sep 1942

Inactivated, 2 Nov 1945

Redesignated 491 Bombardment Squadron, Light, 26 May 1947

Activated in the reserve, 5 Jun 1947

Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949

491 Bombardment Squadron consolidated with 491 Bombardment Squadron, Light

Redesignated organization designated 491 Bombardment Squadron (Medium), 20 Aug 1958

Activated, 1 Nov 1958

Discontinued and inactivated, 25 Jun 1961
Redesignated 491 Attack Squadron, 26 Mar 2019
Activated, 15 Apr 2019

STATIONS

Kelly Field, TX, 15 Aug 1917
Garden City, NY, 3-22 Nov 1917
Aulnat (near Clermont-Ferrand), France, 18 Dec 1917
St Nazaire, France, 30 Dec 1918-12 Jan 1919
Garden City NY, c. 23-31 Jan 1919
Karachi, India, 15 Sep 1942
Chakulia, India, 5 Jan 1943 (detachment of ground personnel at Gaya, India, 20 Jul-10 Sep 1943)
Yangkai, China, 10 Jan 1944-13 Sep 1945 (one detachment operated from Kweilin and Liuchow, China, 13 Jun-10 Jul 1944, and another operated from Liuchow, 29 Aug-2 Nov 1944)
Camp Kilmer, NJ, 1-2 Nov 1945
New Haven, CT, 5 Jun 1947-27 Jun 1949
Dyess AFB, TX, 1 Nov 1958-25 Jun 1961
Hancock Field ANG Base, NY, 15 Apr 2019

ASSIGNMENTS

Unkn, 15 Aug-Dec 1917
Seventh Aviation Instruction Center, Dec 1917-Dec 1918
Unkn, Dec 1918-31 Jan 1919
341 Bombardment Group, 15 Sep 1942-2 Nov 1945
341 Bombardment Group, 5 Jun 1947-27 Jun 1949
341 Bombardment Wing, 1 Nov 1958-25 Jun 1961
49 Operations Group, 15 Apr 2019

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-25, 1942-1945
B-47, 1958-1961

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Theater of Operations

Campaign Streamers

India-Burma
China Defensive
New Guinea
China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

French Indochina, 11 Dec 1944-12 Mar 1945

EMBLEM



On a yellow disc, border black, a medium blue sphere in base, marked with white lines of latitude and longitude, and having a black and red stake affixed at pole, being rung by white horseshoe, trimmed black, leaving white speed lines to rear toward sinister chief. (Approved, 19 Oct 1944)

A globe of the world which is pierced at the north pole by a peg around which is a horseshoe, hence the Squadron nickname of "Ringer". The insignia was conceived and designed by Lt. Carl A Gibson when the squadron operated, with remarkably few losses in men and aircraft, over Burma from bases in India. The "Ringer" symbolizes not only the organization's good fortune, but the object of its activities as well. The stake represents the target and the horseshoe symbolizes the "Ringer" Squadron, the 491, hitting its objectives.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Constructed and maintained facilities, Feb-Dec 1918.

Conducted summer training at various locations to include Rockwell Field, CA, and Pearson Field, WA. Inactivated on 2 March 1937 at Seattle by relief of personnel.

Combat in CBI, 10 Jan 1943-25 Jun 1945.

The 491 Bombardment Squadron (M) was constituted and authorized to be made active, pursuant to War Department letter dated 14 Aug 42. On 16 Sep 42, General Order No. 42, Headquarters,

Tenth American Air Force, New Delhi, India activated the Squadron at Karachi, India. Major Blair M. Sorenson was named its first Commanding Officer, and it became a unit of the 341st Bombardment Group, along with the 11th, 22nd and 490th Squadrons.

The 491 operated missions over Burma from there and from various staging areas. Major Edward M. Garret succeeded Major Sorenson as C.O. on March 29, 1943 when Maj. Sorenson became group operations office. In July and August of 1943 a considerable part of the Squadron's ground personnel served with a training unit of the Air Transport Command at Gaya, while the Squadron itself continued to operate successfully through the monsoon season with only a skeleton ground force serving the combat men.

The Ringer outfit was probably the first squadron of any type in the CBI theater to use all sixteen of its aircraft on a single mission and was frequently commended by the Tenth Air Force officials for its high standard of aircraft maintenance.

Plans to transfer the Squadron to China and the Fourteenth Air Force, late in 1943, caused both the 491 and the 22nd to be ordered to cut back to "skeleton" squadrons. The 491 retained between half and two-thirds of the personnel that a normal medium operational squadron would have. Since the only source of supplies to China was Air Transport Command flying the Hump, space on the transports was pretty much reserved for aircraft parts, gasoline and ammunition. Gen Chennault did not want the space needed for these essential materials to be occupied by more than a minimum number of men and therefore directed a limited number of personnel be transported by aircraft over the mountains and wilderness of the Himalayan range." Consequently, from that time on, all guards and general detailed personnel were supplied by the Chinese rather than by U.S.A.A.F. personnel.

The Squadron's move to Yangkai, in Yunan Province, China, began early in January 1944 and by the end of February virtually all of the organization's personnel and equipment were at their new base. The squadron one aircraft and three of its men over "the Hump" while ferrying equipment.

From February 1944 thru 15 Sep 1945 the squadron carried out missions over China, French Indo China, Thailand and Burma, New Guinea and the South China Sea. The last reported combat mission included 3 B-25s from the 22nd Bomb Squadron and 1 B-25, piloted by Capt Walker, from the 491, in an attack on the Vinh rail yards. We believe that Capt Walker also piloted the 491's last reported CBI mission, which was a leaflet drop in the area of Liuchow, China.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources

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

US Army Order of Battle 1919-1941. Steven E. Clay. Combat Studies Institute Press. US Army Combined Arms Center. Fort Leavenworth, KS. Nd.