

706 FIGHTER SQUADRON



MISSION

The mission of the 706 Fighter Squadron, located at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., is to oversee Air Force Reserve Command members assigned to the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center, supporting missions in its 57 Wing, 53 Wing and 505 Command and Control Wing. Pilots assigned to the 706 FS fly A-10, F-15C, F-15E, F-16 and F-22 aircraft and HH-60G helicopters.

LINEAGE

706 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 20 Mar 1943
Activated, 1 Apr 1943
Redesignated 706 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 20 Aug 1943
Inactivated, 28 Aug 1945
Redesignated 706 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 26 Sep 1947
Activated in the Reserve, 26 Mar 1948
Inactivated, 27 Jun 1949
Redesignated 706 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 9 Sep 1955
Activated in the Reserve, 8 Oct 1955
Inactivated, 16 Nov 1957
Activated in the Reserve, 7 Feb 1959
Redesignated 706 Tactical Airlift Squadron, 1 Jul 1967
Redesignated 706 Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Apr 1978
Redesignated 706 Fighter Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

STATIONS

Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Apr 1943

Lowry Field, CO, 8 Jun-24 Oct 1943
Flixton, England, 4 Nov 1943-5 Jul 1945
Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 15 Jul-28 Aug 1945
Biggs AFB, TX, 26 Mar 1948-27 Jun 1949
Donaldson AFB, SC, 8 Oct 1955-16 Nov 1957
Barksdale AFB, LA, 7 Feb 1959
New Orleans NAS (later NAS JRB ANG; ARS), LA, 8 May 1961

ASSIGNMENTS

446 Bombardment Group, 1 Apr 1943-28 Aug 1945
446 Bombardment Group, 26 Mar 1948-27 Jun 1949
446 Troop Carrier Group, 8 Oct 1955-16 Nov 1957
446 Troop Carrier Group, 7 Feb 1959
446 Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Apr 1959
926 Troop Carrier (later, 926 Tactical Airlift; 926 Tactical Fighter; 926 Fighter) Group, 17 Jan 1963
926 Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-24, 1943-1945
Unkn, 1948-1949
C-45, 1955-1957
C-46, 1956-1957
C-119, 1959-1970
C-130, 1969-1978
A-37, 1978-1982
A-10, 1981-1992
F-16, 1992

COMMANDERS

Lt Co IMilton D. Willis, 1 Apr 1943
Lt Col William D. Kyle Jr., 27 Dec 1944
Maj Frank N. Yochem Jr., 8 Apr-28 Aug 1945
Unkn, 26 Mar 1948-27 Jun 1949
Lt Col Ben J. Manginni, Oct 1955-1957
Lt Col William G. Paine, 7 Feb 1959
Maj Hilliard F. Kelly, 8 May 1961
Maj Arthur A. Gentry, 17 Jan 1963
Col Andrew Chaplin, c. Jul 1963
Lt Col John J. Ibert, by Dec 1968
Lt Col John D. Laney, by Jun 1971
Lt Col Otis K. Bentley, by Sep 1972
Lt Col James L. Britton, by Dec 1974
Lt Col Thomas Q. Howard, by Dec 1975

Lt Col Odie K. Tucker, 1 May 1977
Lt Col Huey J. Hebert, by Mar 1978
Lt Col Emmons R. Parrott, 5 Jun 1986
Lt Col Thomas O. Coleman Jr., 1 Nov 1989
Lt Col Craig W. Mays, 16 Dec 1992
Lt Col Lee J. Brundage, 1 Oct 1994
Lt Col Seth G. Wilson, 20 Apr 1995
Lt Col Thomas L. King, 1 Jul 1996
Lt Col Robert R. Swain Jr., 19 Oct 1997-unkn
Lt Col Robert M. Lindell, 9 Jan 2008
Lt Col Craig R. Jones, 30 Sep 2009
Lt Col Dean Caldwell, 24 Jun 2011
Lt Col Todd Tobergte, 2015
Lt Col Jan H. Stahl, 15 Dec 2017
Lt Col Michael Fisher, 10 Feb 2019
Lt Col Michael Fisher, 31 Jan 2020

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

World War II

Air Offensive, Europe

Normandy

Northern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

Air Combat, EAME Theater

Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

26 Jan 1968-10 Jan 1972

1 Apr 1978-20 Jan 1980

1 Apr 1988-31 Mar 1990

27 Aug 2007-26 Aug 2009.

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

14 Feb 1968-6 Nov 1972

EMBLEM



Gules, a bezant charged off center to sinister with a torteau fimbriated Sable bearing a fleur-de-lis Or; all within a diminished bordure Black. Attached above the disc a Yellow scroll edged with

a narrow Black border and inscribed 706TH FIGHTER SQ in Black letters. Attached below the disc a Yellow scroll edged with a narrow Black border and inscribed "CAJUNS" in Black letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Yellow is an Air Force color. It refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The red disc surmounting the gold disk at its edge gives the allusion of a crescent. This is indicative of the unit's home area, the " Crescent City " of New Orleans. The fleur-de-lis suggests the area's history and heritage and also reflects the Squadron's willingness to defend its territory. (Approved, 8 Aug 1996)

MOTTO

Cajuns

OPERATIONS

If a parallel with human life may be pardoned, this squadron, then and for long after known as the 706th Bombardment Squadron, was conceived by the order for constitution on 20 March 1943, and was born several days later with its activation at Davis-Monthan Field, Arizona, on 1 April 1943. All Fool's Day is a good day to be born if one is brave and debonair.

Unlike humankind, military organizations have two births: the first is activation, the second when the first men enter on its roster. Theologians may legitimately dispute whether the soul is first present at conception or at birth. But in the case of the military unit there can scarcely be a difference of opinion, for the soul of a military organization is created only through a somewhat mystic syncretism of the souls of the men who join it. So it was at its second birth that the 706th began to acquire a personality with the transfer of men from the 39th Bombardment Group to the 706th and the other squadrons of the 446 Bombardment Group. Additional men came from the air base at Clovis, New Mexico, and from other Second Air Force stations.

Beginning about 29 April the squadrons of the group lost their key men, both commissioned and enlisted, to the School of Applied Tactics at Orlando, Florida, for a month's specialized training. By 29 May these men were on their way back to the main body to lead the rest into first phase training. But no serious training was undertaken at Davis-Monthan, for by the first part of June the 706th and her sisters had moved to Lowry Field. It was here that the major portion of training was to be accomplished.

First phase training was scheduled to begin promptly. But this time table was thrown off kilter by a serious dearth of essential equipment and by the imperative necessity for the unit itself to complete half-built buildings assigned to them in order to house the men and equipment. Consequently, it was not until about 1 July that these matters were remedied sufficiently to permit the inauguration of a regular training program. By the beginning of August, some 70 combat crews were present, although these were incomplete. But the problems of the group in this period were grave. In the first place, the abrupt appearance of such a large number of crews put a heavy strain on a training program just getting off the ground. Much more serious, however, was the general inadequacy of training which obtained among the newcomers, officers and enlisted men alike.

For instance, not only were a large number of the pilots not checked out on the B-24, but many had never even been up in this type of aircraft. The level of training among the navigators was also particularly deficient. To crown the whole edifice of problems, the group experienced a chronic shortage of aircraft. Since crew training deficiencies had to be made up with an inadequate number of planes, plus the fact that navigators were late in being assigned to these crews, the group was behind on its training schedule. Despite these difficulties, however, the group managed to reach the final stage of training during September. Formation flying and navigational flights were especially stressed, with group and squadron missions being flown around the clock.

The ground echelon of the 706th left Lowry Field on 1 October by train and arrived at camp Shanks, New York, on 21 October. This was the final stage before going overseas, involving the issuing of equipment and checking personnel and equipment records. These matters were handled expeditiously, for on 25 October the ground echelon left camp Shanks by truck, boarded an Army transport, moved down the Hudson to New York harbor and there boarded the Queen Mary. That great ship sailed on 27 October and arrived in the Firth of Clyde on 2 November. By 5 November the entire group had arrived at AAF Station 125, at Flixton, near Bungay in Suffolk. The men of the 706th were kept vastly preoccupied settling down in their new static, which was to be their home for the duration of the war, while they awaited the arrival of the air echelon. For those who served in the ETO during the Second World War, the group historian's brief picture of the arrival at Flixton may conjure up memories: The ground echelon of the 446th Bombardment Group arrived at Station 125 at Flixton by truck convoy from the railroad station at Bungay. Men and barracks bags were dumped unceremoniously onto living sites; our arrival looked like an invasion of GIs into a Robin Hood forest. The countryside still had a late autumn beauty, but that night, in unheated barracks and huts, officers and men discovered how clammy the English weather can be.

Unit censors were snowed under by stacks of mail, most of it repeating Chaplain Gannon's observation, "Over here you know it's raining when you can't see the hills, and when you see the hills you know it's going to rain again soon." Meanwhile, the flight echelon moved by air to the staging area at Lincoln, Nebraska, during the period 20-26 October 1943. A thorough check was made on the equipment of the planes and their crews, and the latter received briefings on the imminent overseas flight.

Assigned to the southern route, the 706th and the rest of the group flew from Lincoln to Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, Florida. After another briefing, the crews took off for Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, whence they moved on to Natal, Brazil. From Natal the 706th flew directly to Dakar in French West Africa. The group historian has left a description of the crew's reaction to the long-over-water flight: Flying the Atlantic was not the death-defying pioneering the adventure-lover thinks. True, the briefing would have made the Wright Brothers blanch, but on the whole, the trip was rather monotonous. You would just sit or sleep on your heavy flying clothes for nearly eleven 'Tours. First, you'd read some of the books in the Red Cross kits, you'd talk, you'd try to stretch out but four other guys would be on the flight deck playing cards — so you'd just sit. You'd try to do all these things as slowly as possible, trying to kill time — you'd sit

and look out — nothing, to see but dark, gray water.

Upon arrival at Dakar, we all agreed we knew more about the shape, size and structure of the inside of a B-24 than the men who designed and built her back at Willow Run. From Dakar the squadron flew up to Marrakech in had sore tall tales to tell of their liberty in of the Almoravides and the Almohades. The long during the third week in November French Morocco. The boys the beautiful, romantic ol hop to Britain was made Reunited once more in the United Kingdom, the 706th got down to the business of training once more. Several officers and men from the squadron were sent on detached service to RAF and AAF stations for specialized training designed to aid the group in becoming operational. That day was at last at hand. On 16 December 1943 the 706th, with the rest of group, flew its first combat mission to Bremen.

By the time the 706th entered into combat, the submarine menace had subsided sufficiently for first bombing priorities to be switched to the German Air Force, the aviation and other key industries. For the remainder of December the 706th flew about seven missions, five of them to Ludwigshaven. Weather kept the number of missions down, but of these several were against the installations of the V rocket (termed "Noball" targets) on the French coast. Airfields and aircraft factories received most attention in February. A Luftwaffe training base was attacked at Tours; other airfields were bombed at Hesepe, Gotha, and the Gilze-Reijen airfield in Holland. Aircraft factories were struck at Gotha and Furth, a suburb of Numbers. At least three missions were run against No ball targets. The entire group was in gross error in bombing the towns of Arnhem and Nijmegen in Holland, having mistaken them for targets of opportunity in Germany. Only briefed targets were permitted to be bombed in occupied Europe.

With the advent of March and clear weather the squadron's missions were more frequent. At least four missions were flown against aircraft factories at Germandorf, Genshagen, Brandenburg, and Friedrichshafen. Airdromes were hit at Handorf and Nancy, while No ball targets were attacked at Watten, Siracourt, and Wizernes, France. In addition, the vital supply item of ball bearings received attention by an attack on the factory at Erkner. All Fool's Day must have held surprises for the people of Schaffhausen, Switzerland—and no doubt for the 37 planes of the 446th group which, failing to reach the chemical works at Ludwigshaven, bombed the Swiss town thinking themselves still in Germany. This incident caused even more international repercussions than had the inadvertent bombing in Holland, for Switzerland was both unoccupied and neutral. Carrying on after this embarrassment, the 706th helped the group in the Allied struggle against enemy air power by attacking airdromes at Bourges in France and Tutow, Bernburg, Oberpfaffenhofen, Gutersloh, and Gablingen in Germany.

Several No ball missions were run, and an aircraft factory at Brunswick was bombed. During April the squadron made its first attacks on marshalling yards, the beginning of what was to become a major target during May in an effort to cripple the German transportation system prior to the invasion. During the latter month, the 706th visited marshalling yards at Brussels, Munster, Brunswick, Liege, Mulhouse, and Konz-Karthaus. Some of these, as in the case of Brunswick and Mulhouse, were bombed twice. Synthetic oil began to receive its proper attention with attacks on plants at Bohlen, Merseburg, and Zeitz. Interspersed in this already

busy schedule were attacks on airdromes at Tutow, Brunswick, Rotenburg in Germany, and at Reims, Orleans, and Orly (Paris) in France.

The month of D-Day was a dramatic and frenetic time. According to the fervent assertions of the group historian, the 446th Group had the honor of leading the Eighth Air Force over the Normandy beaches on 6 June: Colonel Jacob J. Brogger, the Group Commander, led the Group, which led the 20th Combat Wing, which led 2nd Bomb. Division, which led the 8th Air Force, over the French coast. He was formation Commander, riding as co-pilot with Captain Charles Ryan of the 704th Bombardment Squadron, and bombs were dropped at 0556. Several other Groups claimed the distinction of being the first over the beachheads on D-Day, but the 446th flew the lead position as briefed.

Of that memorable day in the squadron, its historian has left a small vignette: D-day (June 6): Since the squadron is so infused into the group, anything which affects one is bound to affect the other. So in speaking of "feelings" it is hardly correct to say that the squadron felt thus-and-so. On D-Day, among the ground personnel, the tempo of enthusiasm stepped up, and many exemplary sentiments were expressed. Some few of these are noted.

Ammunition worker: "Last night" June 5th "we could tell a difference. For one thing, during the afternoon, some Pathfinders landed. And there were a lot of strange officers. We were using every different kind of bomb. We knew that something unusual was up — we made a good guess." Ordnance Chief: "I'll tell you how it was. I had 35 men working for me. They worked all night long. Not one would leave to sleep or cat until he had seen the last plane leave the ground on the first mission of D-Day. How did we feel? Answering for myself, I felt that if those planes returned within the hour, that I'd be willing to pitch right in and load them again. As it turned out, we did just about that. We loaded for two more missions that day."

An Engineering Officer: "I'd say the efficiency of the ground crews increased 100%, There were a few crews with nothing to do. They had finished loading their ships. They hadn't enough. They must come over to help us. We had to nearly knock them in the head to get them to take some sleep." A Crew Chief: "My ship hasn't been named yet. I just call it "Bab ." She is brand new, all shiny silver. And when she left the dispersal area to take part in the first mission of D-Day, she was going on the fourth raid of her experience. I had a pair of binoculars, and I followed tie "Baby" all the way down the perimeter track, and saw her halt at the runway, sitting at an angle and waiting for the light. I saw her become airborne."

But the general consensus was that the day and events were unforgettable and would never become hazy in memory. And yet, D-Day is already old. Tactical targets in cooperation with the ground forces had first priority for about two v/weeks after D-Day. But on 13 June the squadron returned to the heavy targets with a raid on the docks at Hamburg. In the succeeding days airdromes were hit at Conches in France and Bernburg in Germany. Marshalling yards received attention at Genshagen and Saarbrucken. Politz as raided, the target being a synthetic oil plant, while two Novall targets were hit.

July was a busy and successful period for the 706th. Although only 17 missions were flown, the targets were of a wide variety. The month began with attacks on Noball targets in France, and included missions to Munich, Saarbrücken, Eisenach, Strasbourg, Bremen, and Ludwigshafen. In addition, missions were flown in support of the ground forces. Struggling to smash the German Air Force, the 706th expended most of its energies in August in the sphere. Airfields were struck at Melun, Orleans, Coulomniers, Loan/ Couvron, Dijon/Longvic, Plantlunne, and Brunswick, while aircraft factories were bombed at Fallersleben and Rostock. Germany's oil supply was attacked at Douai, Kiel, and Magdeburg.

One would think that with such a schedule, little time would be left for anything else. But this does not take sufficiently into account the exuberance of youth. During that summer in England, the 706th and her sister squadrons were almost as frantically busy with sports as they were over Germany. Touch football, basketball, soft ball, case ball, volleyball, swimming—even a rodeo, received an enormous amount of time and effort. Tournaments were held and the group held the division championship in volley ball. Besides sports, there were many other diversions, including an average of five different movies a week, the Pub (open only four times a week because of the beer shortage), concerts by the station orchestra, monthly talent nights, and weekly dances for officers and enlisted men.

The first nine days of September were occupied in a novel assignment for the 706th and the group—hauling flour to Orleans. A total of 2,766,967 pounds of supplies were flown to France in ten days. There followed the operational missions, with nine against German targets such as marshalling yards at Heilbronn, Coblenz, Kassel, and Hamm, a jet engine factory at Kiel, and a locomotive works at Kassel. On 13 September a supply dropping mission was flown to paratroopers of the 1st Airborne Army which had landed near Nijmegen, Holland, to secure the bridge there for the advancing Allied army seeking to turn the German flank on the Rhine.

No doubt many a "paddlefoot" was taken on a mission or two, just for the ride and to see the sights. Such was the case of Sgt. Rod Murdock. He was not of the 706th but of the sister 704th, but the record which he left might serve to portray the general tone, if not the details, of all such "free rides." In reply to my anxious entreaty, the Major enthusiastically nodded his head and off I went in the direction of Unit Equipment with a crew of veteran gunners for escort. Due to a one hour time delay, we just sat around, sprawled all over each other, some sleeping lightly, and some softly reliving their last bawdy celebration in London, followed inevitably by detailed hopes and plans for their next. A two-day pass was harder on these boys than flying time and again over flak studded targets.

Promptly at 0600, Jock, the Chief's only master, grunted, got up slowly and shuffled over to the front bomb bay entrance of the "Red Ass." Without a word or sign, every man followed suit and sleepily made his way to each particular station. . . . All the boys lapsed into a prone reverie, but yours truly was wide-eyed with awe and curiosity. As Charlie gave all four engines full throttle, the ... "Red Ass" joyfully cavorted out of its dispersal ... and gleefully scooted down the perimeter. ... The target that Jock was going to hit was a two mile long tunnel twisting through the Foret de Montagne, near the little town of Rilly. This tunnel was properly listed, therefore,

as Hilly la Montagne, and it was just one of the endless list of tactical targets the Air Forces had to knock out. Jerry was rushing supplies to his V-I sites through this French tunnel and to stop this flow of devastating components, little Jock was off to do a job.

The first difference between this flight and a simple Lowry field bomb Special was southwest of Antwerp, where out of nowhere in particular, a straight white burst shot directly up to 20,000 feet plus, in front of our section. When Charley finished swallowing his gum, a low straining curse floated over through the intercom to our listening ears, and knowing that this burst was no shooting star, drizzling beads of sweat appeared on my winkled brow at 19,000 feet. My watch showed 1007 as the three gargantuan eggs, 2GCO pounders, went hurtling downward.

As black puffs of flak were worrying my observations no end, billowing clouds of rusty brown smoke could be seen gushing skyward from the target area. Since this little six-gun battery team was evidently bucking to beat the band, Charles W. Ryan evacuated the area with all possible haste. At this writing, I search for amusing description; at that time I searched for the nearest flak suit, far from amusing.

Crossing the channel, time dragged a wee bit, but there was no boredom for me. . . . Charlie always loved to land first, if possible (and he usually made it so), but. . . Lt LeRoy was a good man, and at 1200 hours exactly, he kicked it over and speedily went in for a sweet landing, with the "Red Ass" close in the rear, impudently prancing down on all four feet, wagging his tail (skid) behind him. . . . As M/Sgt Jimmy Collins . . . drove us into the interrogation, I joyfully leaned back on the tail gate, looked all around me, and slowly drank in the newly found beauty and solidity of ground and trees and last, but' not least, Nissen huts.

During October the German Air Force was cutting up an increased opposition and the flak also became heavier. The price of operations for the group was high, but the 706th had no casualties. Airdromes and marshaling yards received the greatest attention with the former type of target being hit at Lachen/Speyerdorf, Lippstadt, and Harburg, and marshaling yards were attacked at Harran, Csnabruck, Cologne (at least twice during the month), and Mainz. Much more attention was given to oil production during November, with strikes at Castrop-Rauxel, Misburg, Sterkrade, and Bottrop. After the latter mission on 11 November, the group stood down for ten days for runway repairs before bombing a synthetic oil plant at Hamburg on the 21st.

Four missions filled out the rest of the month, directed against marshalling yards and a railroad viaduct. The few missions which were flown in the wretched December weather were almost all in direct support of ground forces engaged in the struggle to repel the German counterthrust in the Ardennes, known as the "Battle of the Bulge." On the 16th the group celebrated a year's operations in the European theater.

But it can not always be so. January brought dramatic tragedy to the 706th on its own home base. The 706th historian has left an account of the death of the "Q-Queenie": early in the morning tiny rose and violet clouds drifted slowly across the cold blue eastern sky. There was

no inkling of haze dimming the brilliance of the morning star. This was the initial aspect of New Year's Day.

But when Pilot Harold Blumberg nosed Q-Queenie into the wind a few minutes past 0800 hours a great grey fog had quite shunted aside all the promised beauty. The pilot could scarcely have seen the sixth cart of a mile ahead of him. At an angle beneath and slightly in front he saw the sergeant of the caravan crew raise a blinker light above his head, press a button with his thumb and he responded to the green signal. Pilot Blumberg pushed the throttles forward. Q-Queenie's left wheel slipped from the runway to the soggy grass. At this point 1000 yards — 1/6 of the airstrip's length — had been traversed. Blumberg pulled his plane back to its proper path. In the report recording the incident of Q-Queenie it was suggested That pilot Blumberg should have stored his plane immediately after this occurrence.

Blumberg, however, did not stop. Q-Queenie arose deliberately. So long as the men in flying control could keep her in their vision, her shadowy, fog-logged shape was never far above the ground. There is, in order, the runway, an open field, and a cluster of trees. They heard the plane crunching through these trees. There was a single heavy flash, and then they heard trees, earth and plane being rooted apart. This was followed by the crackling ammunition exploded by heat; Q-Queenie, her ripped and disintegrated body strewn from hell to breakfast, had completed her part of the day's doings. The war was instantly over for nine of her ten man crew. They never knew what hit them.

Cpl. Ayd had been at the left waist window. He didn't know whether he had been blown clear or thrown clear. He had found himself walking in the field, trying to brush away the little dancing flames that seemed to spring cut from his clothing. Every time he would kill one with a swat of his blackened, blistered hands, two would burst forth from some other spot. A couple of men ran out of the fog and helped him. Cpl. Ayd was questioned. Had he heard any unusual sounds before the crash? Did he have an idea of what might have happened? Ayd shook his head.

The medics believed Cpl. Ayd's burns were hardly severe enough to threaten his life. They were more apprehensive of shock. During the afternoon it happened that none of Q-Queenie's crew still lived. All had gone home. February 1945 was ushered in with the "Siege of Magdeburg" in which five successive missions were flown against the synthetic oil industry of that city. Almost all of the remaining missions were directed at marshalling yards, at Osnabruck, Siegen, Nurnberg, Northeim, and Halle. A mission was flown to Berlin; the oil refinery at Misburg and a foundry at Meschede were hit. But the air offensive was not entirely a one-way street. The rocket bombs were still exploding in England with uncomfortable frequency.

And the group historian has recorded what might be termed "public reaction" An English woman was telling about the buzz bomb. She naturally began by offering the Englishman's honest meed of praise for the genius of whatever blasted German had contributed most to its invention. "Oh, you've got to hand it to the blighters," she said. "It's really a notable piece of work, you know. My husband saw one of them real close and he said there isn't a shoddy inch

in the entire contraption. Marvelous machinery. However, it is also very dangerous. If you are fifty yards from the explosion only God can save you." A GI was lounging at the bar. He looked up and said: "It'll never hurt yer, lady." The woman gasped. "Well, my dear boy — I can only say that you have no idea of what you are talking about. It will kill you as dead as last year's calendar. Of course, you may be right. It might not hurt at all." The GI grinned.

March 1945 was one of the busiest months since the summer of 1944 with the 706th on alert night after night. Twenty-five missions were flown in which the two major objectives were to deprive the enemy of his oil supply and to deny him the use of airfields used by jet fighters. By April industrial targets had been pretty well obliterated, so that the last month of operations saw a concentration on marshalling yards and airdromes. The last operational mission for the 706th and the group was an attack on a rail bridge at Salzburg. On 6 May the group received an official operational stand down, and two nights later all England was celebrating V-E Day, The squadron had achieved an enviable record in combat, not the least part of which was its low casualty rate. From December 1943 through April 1945, only 41 were killed in action, while 119 were missing. Of the latter group, many returned after V-E Day.

The "breaking out of peace" left, strangely, its mark of nostalgia, as was so often the case among combat veterans. It was as though the men knew instinctively that the high water mark in their lives had passed, and that much of what remained would be inevitably anticlimactic: No, not a great deal took place in May, except that it was a long month of waiting to move towards home and the Pacific. A lot of people said they guessed the group would be busted all to hell, and its men scattered to the four winds. When this was suggested there were plenty around to say: "I hope not." And some others: "Yeah — since we've come along together this far, it would be a nice thing if we could stick it all the way through."

Back in June of last year, when we celebrated our 100th mission, Colonel Brogger's words seemed the merest commonplace. In effect, he said: "You may not believe it now, but someday all of us will be homesick for the days you're sweating through now, and certainly you will miss the men you sweat them with." Well, about the men — yes; and even many of the days. Unlike so many other units, the 706th and its group lost no time in returning to the United States. The flight crews left in their planes from 15 to 18 June, and the ground echelon sailed on the Queen Mary on 6 July, landing in New York on the 11th. From New York, the 706th, together with the rest of the 446th, moved out to Sioux Falls for the final act - inactivation. The 706th was inactivated on 28 August 1945.

A new phase in the career of the 706th began with its redesignation as a very heavy squadron and activation as a reserve squadron on 26 March 1948 at Biggs Field, Texas. Somewhat over a year later the 706th, still at Biggs Field, was again inactivated. Six years later, the 706th experienced a somewhat drastic change in function when it was redesignated the 706th Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium. On 8 October 1955 the squadron was activated as a reserve squadron at Donaldson Air Force Base, South Carolina. Hardly more than two years later, on 16 November 1957, the squadron was inactivated. A further period of reserve duty was in the offing for the unit when it was ordered activated on or about 8 February 1959 at Barksdale Air

Force Base, Louisiana, and assigned to the Continental Air Command.

A \$2-million-hangar was completed in 1959 to accommodate the U.S. Air Force Reserve 706th Troop Carrier Squadron.

The 706th TFS, 926th TFG, at NAS New Orleans, Louisiana, received its first A-10s in December, 1981, completing the conversion from A-37s in June, 1982. The group was initially assigned to the 434th TFW at Grissom, transferring to the 442nd TFW at Richards-Gebaur on February 1, 1984. On July 1, 1987 it transferred to the 917th TFW at Barksdale on July 1, 1987. The 926th was activated for Desert Shield/Desert Storm on December 29, 1990 and deployed eighteen aircraft, including one loaned from the 47th TFS at Barksdale. The group was released from active duty on June 15, 1991. On February 1, 1992, the units Tactical from their designations. The group transitioned to F-16s in October, 1992, sending many of their A-10s to AMARC for storage.

The 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 926th Tactical Fighter Group, an A-10 unit stationed at Naval Air Station New Orleans, Louisiana, deployed to Saudi Arabia. In combat, reservists claimed a handful of noteworthy firsts during the war. Captain Bob Swain, a pilot from the 706th Tactical Fighter Squadron, scored the first-ever A-10 air-to-air kill when he destroyed an Iraqi helicopter.

The A-10 managed to score two air-to-air kills during Desert Storm, both made using the GAU-8/A cannon. The first was scored by Capt. Bob Swain from the 706th TFS against a BO-105 helicopter on 6 February 1991. The A-10 (77-0205) was later named "Chopper Popper" and is now displayed at the Air Force Armament Museum at Eglin AFB, Florida. The other was by Captain Todd "Shanghai" Sheehy from the 511th TFS, who shot down an Mi-8 on 15 February 1991.

On May 22, 1996, the 706th FS began their conversion back to the A-10 with the receipt of 78-0655 and 80-0237 from the 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw AFB. The 47th FS at Barksdale provided 79-0106 and 79-0136 on June 17, 1996. 79-0093, 79-0121, and 80-0188 came from the 442nd FW, AFRES, at Whiteman AFB, Missouri. The 926th Fighter Wing finished their transition back to the A-10 with the official welcoming ceremony held on October 18, 1996.

The 926th's tail code was NO derived from New Orleans. Tail caps were painted red with flight color borders of black for A Flight or white for B Flight added in 1985. The group's A-10s carried nose art and/or nicknames during and after Desert Storm, in fact most carried the nose art all the way to AMARC. The 926th Fighter Wing new markings are similar to those previously applied to their F-16s. The A-10 tail carries the same NO as before. In keeping with the 926th's use of the New Orleans motif and Mardi Gras colors, the new tail stripe is purple and green with yellow fleurs-de-lis painted in the purple portion of the stripe. AFRES has been applied to the engine nacelles.

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