

736 BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON, HEAVY



MISSION

LINEAGE

736 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 14 May 1943
Activated, 1 Jun 1943
Redesignated 736 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy, 5 Aug 1945
Inactivated, 17 Oct 1945
Activated in the reserve, 27 Apr 1947
Redesignated 736 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 27 Jun 1949
Ordered to active service, 1 May 1951
Inactivated, 16 Jun 1951
Redesignated 736 Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 26 May 1952
Activated in the reserve, 13 Jun 1952
Inactivated, 1 Jan 1953
Redesignated 736 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy and activated, 15 Nov 1962
Organized, 1 Feb 1963

STATIONS

Alamogordo AAFld, NM, 1 Jun 1943
Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Jul 1943
McCook AAFld, NE, 30 Jul 1943
Charleston AAFld, SC, 3 Oct-8 Dec 1943
Torretto, Italy, 16 Jan 1944
San Giovanni, Italy, 24 Jan 1944-Jul 1945
Sioux Falls AAFld, SD, 1 Aug 1945
Pyote AAFld, TE, 17 Aug-17 Oct 1945
McChord Field, WA, 27 Apr 1947
Spokane AFB, WA, 27 Jun 1949-16 Jun 1951

Portland Intl Aprt, OR, 13 Jun 1952-1 Jan 1953
Columbus AFB, MS, 1 Feb 1963

ASSIGNMENTS

454 Bombardment Group, 1 Jun 1943-17 Oct 1945
454 Bombardment Group, 27 Apr 1947-16 Jun 1951
454 Troop Carrier Group, 13 Jun 1952-1 Jan 1953
Strategic Air Command, 15 Nov 1962
454 Bombardment Wing, 1 Feb 1963

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-24, 1943-1945
C-46
B-52, 1963

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

Offensive, Europe
Air Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Normandy
Northern France
Southern France
North Apennines
Rhineland
Central Europe
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations
Bad Voslau, Austria, 12 Apr 1944
Linz, Austria, 25 Jul 1944

EMBLEM



MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Combat in MTO and ETO, 8 Feb 1944-25 Apr 1945.

On June 2, 1943, the 736th Bombardment Squadron (H) was activated at Davis-Monthan Field, Tucson, Arizona. The cadre was taken from the 39th Bombardment Group (H). Captain James D. Jamison became Commanding Officer.

On July 3, 1943, the tactical personnel departed for Orlando, Florida, to attend the Air Forces School of Applied Tactics. Captain Jamison, Commanding Officer; Lt. Grady, Operations Officer; Lt. Stamm, S-2; Lt. Mealy, Armament Officer; Lt. Paulson, Squadron Navigator; Lt. Quinn, Squadron Bombardier; Lt. Kilimnik, Flight Commander; Lt. Wren, Engineering Officer; Lt. Barauch, Communications Officer, and Captain Prejean, Medical Officer.

Until July 21, 1943, this group, with the necessary complement of enlisted men, enjoyed the hotels in Orlando, and attended classes of the Heavy Bombardment Course. On the 21st, we set forth for Pinecastle one of the satellite fields of the Orlando base, to carry out the lessons learned at AAFSAT. Our departure was accompanied by a torrent of rain, and, upon our arrival at Pinecastle, we found ourselves living in mud-surrounded tents, battling over-sized mosquitoes and a number of other hardships.

On July 31, 1943, under the command of Captain DuBrow, Group S-2 Officer, the ground echelon departed for the cornfields of Nebraska, arriving at McCook on August 3rd. The flying echelon left August first and reached McCook the following day, having spent the night in Shreveport, Louisiana. The remainder of the squadron, consisting of Lt. Sink, Adjutant, and Lt. Scheiner, Supply Officer, with 76 enlisted men, had arrived in McCook on July 26th.

The Squadron continued to grow during its stay at McCook. On August 20th, Lt. Phebus arrived to become Ordnance and Transportation Officer. Lt. Stern put in his appearance and became Assistant S-2 Officer. Lt. Trapani, who had been with the Group at Orlando where he was in an accident which hospitalized him, became a member of the 736th Squadron as Tech Supply Officer. On September seventh, Lt. Beck became Assistant Operations Officer. Captain Ehrenkrook, fresh from Biggs Field, appeared September twelfth and became Executive Officer. Training continued throughout the period with one battle-scarred ship, good old 072, which will doubtless go down in history and eventually find its way into the Smithsonian Institute as the airplane which won the war.

Keeping 072 in the air, occupied the time of Lt. Wren and his Engineering staff while S-2 and Operations beavered-away planning missions, most of which had to be scrubbed. Operations worked out devious schedules keeping one crew aloft and other crew members busy with link trainer and bomb trainer. By this time the air echelon had been increased by the arrival of Lts. Mattox, Clay, Whitney, Ward and Switzer, complete with crews.

Then came that fatal day. September 31st, aided by a torrential rain, the ground echelon of the 736th Squadron moved by truck to the railroad station of McCook where to the strains of martial music furnished by the base band and with the assistance of the entire female population of McCook, the "Secret" troop movement got underway. We boarded a collection of coaches, which in the words of the Burlington Railroad, were in operation. It was rumored that President Grant's initials could be discerned upon the door in one of the coaches. Thus, began our journey to CharlestOn, South Carolina. Captain Ehrenkrook acted as Assistant Train Commander, while Lt. Stamm performed his duties as Train Quartermaster in an exemplary manner. Under his direction, the mess staff turned out excellent chow which did much to keep up spirits which might well have lagged for 72 sleepless but drowsy hours through Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis, Birmingham, and various other southern hamlets.

The high point of the trip was the maneuver at Birmingham when we were marched through the main streets of the tOwn to the YMCA for a shower only to discover that the YMCA would have none of us. At 0030 hours, OctOber 4th, the train reached Ten Mile Station at Charleston and we staggered off and made for the mess hall. On October 6th, the squadron received the remainder of its complement, with the arrival from Tucson and Clovis of Lts. Forney, Goodwin, Wilson, Hogan, Rabun, Felbab, Noonan, Ellis, Larsen, Nagy, Kutsch, and Peters, and their crews. Training began in earnest with Second Phase Missions, briefed and interrogated by Lts. Stamm and Stern, planned by Lts. Grady and Paulson. Living conditions were interesting. The staff officers were living all over the halls, crew officers were under each others beds, and the GI's were double, if not triple, bunked. At any rate, despite the normal amount of grumbling, we managed to have a good time, but not at the expense of training. The Squadron had the best record for keeping its operational ships in the air, and this record was marred by none but minor accidents.

On November 8th, the Squadron set forth to Walterboro and bivouac. This phase of our training is one that will never be forgotten. It may be termed as our first taste of combat. Not only was the weather altogether different from what was expected, but the mosquitOs were ferocious. It was not sad news to the personnel when we learned that the remaining twO days would not be necessary and the men would return to CharlestOn. Thanks to Captain Mealy and his armament boys who were great

at procuring local poultry, the menu of "C" and "K" rations was favorably substituted by fresh fowl. On November 15th, the Squadron was visited by the P.O.M. inspectors and was found to be ready for overseas duty.

Shortly thereafter, preparations were made to leave. All departments scurried about preparing our equipment for shipping, and, when the word came, everything was in readiness. A fast, and uncomfortable ride to the Port of Embarkation was a thrilling experience- we were fully aware of the earnestness of our mission. Once again, Captain Ehrenkrook was the duly elected troop commander. It was all too hurriedly done. With hustle and bustle, the men found themselves aboard the ferry "Mohawk" headed for a troop ship. The Liberty Ship "S.S. Button Gwinnett" was not a large ship, it must be admitted. It was, however, seaworthy and ready to make its second voyage. The ship was ably manned by veteran seamen and merchantmen under the command of Captain Braithwaite. On December 13, 1944, we were all bunked comfortably five and six high in the hold that was to be our home for the ensuing month. Everything went smoothly with most men witnessing a miniature 'Monte Carlo.' It was the first night out at sea on December 14th when we began to regret our sins and prepare our souls for the death that was sure to come within the next five minutes. Sea Sick! Sea Sick! Never again, we moaned. There were grunts and curses with each roll of the ship. Everyone was evidently in high spirits though, since there could be heard the usual supreme and unsurpassed GI complaints expressed in the manner that only a soldier knows.

Lt. Stern and his staff: James E. Sloan, Robert C. Bell, Joseph A. Persichini and William Durr, published the daily poop sheet the "Button Gazette." The slander, together with the "Adventures of Fearless Freddie," kept the men impatiently waiting for the next day's edition. December 24th, Christmas Eve, 1100 miles eastward of Bermuda, the men at last became serious and sang Christmas Carols. Aside from the usual routine, Christmas was brightened by the voice of President Roosevelt coming over the radio. December 26th- 1200 miles from Gibraltar and a new regime began on the good ship "Button Gwinnett." Open air eating became the rule. Rain mingled with soup and coveralls alike. Pieces of ham, followed by large splashes of hot coffee, flew in all directions with every sway and roll. Men stooped over to cut delicate slices of meat, then straightened up to allow the succulent morsels to slide into their stomachs.

January first- 100 miles from Gibraltar. The New Year was ushered in on the Button Gwinnett with great enthusiasm, amid shouting and banging in the hold. Such old favorites as "Auld Lang Syne" and "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here" were led by Lt. Trapani. Tex Moffatt and Mathew Misejka, with violin and guitar, put out with the well-known aria "Bell-bottom Trousers" and the "Okey-Dokey Song." The sights of Gibraltar and, later, Bizerte harbor were pleasant ones. After leaving Bizerte harbor on the sixth, it was days before we had the thrill of seeing Sorrento, Capri, and then Naples Harbor. On the 13th January, 1944, the Squadron found itself moored at the staging area in Bagnoli only to depart shortly afterward and set up operations at Torretta Air Field. Four days later, the shift from Torretta Field to Cerignola's San Giovanni Air Field reminded all of Army methods and movements. After the air echelon arrived from Oudna, activities began with the bombing of the Orvieto Air Field, Italy, on February 8, 1944. All sections remained intact with section heads as follows: S-1, George Murdock; S-2, Hartney Heraldson; S-3, Therman Ingram; S-4, B. W. Jackson; Engineering, Laurence Berg; Ordnance, Bert Johnson; Armament, Theodore Hubbard; Tech Supply, Harry Loeb; Photo, John Gallagher;

Medics,]. W. Jackson; Communications, Willard Beal. The total strength of the squadron at this time was 394 Enlisted Men and 90 Officers.

April 29, 1944, the old mess hall tent was no longer upright. We filed into the new tufa-block mess hall complete with tables and chairs. With such a magnificent building, even the C-Ration seemed to taste much better. Oh Happy May 22nd- Two fragmentation mISSIOns were flown and frag box lumber became available to the squadron personnel. Great building activity was evidenced throughout the area, with tents being extended, boarded in, floored, and tables and chests being made. The new enlisted men's club "Esquire Inn" was officially opened on February 1, 1945. The committee included Lawrence Neima, Therman Ingram, Walter Jancek, and Robert C. Bell. The committee had been busy supervising the construction of the new club while other valiant volunteers were on the alert, and secured from the Red Cross a supply of comfortable chairs and other furniture. With Emilio Santipadri as artist, many beautiful and enticing pictures, quite unlike "Pink Elephants," were painted on the white walls. William Wertz and Estes Laseman added color to the club room with the hanging of several unsalvageable parachutes. At the close of the campaign, many of the original personnel were still with the unit.

There had been a few changes. Major Eaton, replaced Major Skinner who had replaced Major Jamison as CO. Captain Perry was the last of twelve operations officers that superceded Major Grady. Lt. Nickas replaced Lt. Durnford as supply officer while Rolland Warkle replaced B. W. Jackson as supply section head. Richard Bowman replaced Bert Johnson as ordnance section head. First Sergeant George Murdock had been replaced by Robert Frazer, George Stanley and, later, Gene Nash. Among other unforgettable things, the 736th Squadron Baseball Team will live with us always. With Adolphus Brittingham as manager and Joseph Zgoda as Field Captain, the team was tops in the league, winning 21 games while loosing only 6.

As we left Italy, there were many who felt they wanted to return some day. They found it to be a strange country full of strange people with old customs and modes of life. Aside from the usual dislikes, there are many who found in Italy a queer fascination. It was not the Cognac, Rhum or the Vi no but something beyond that, something that one cannot explain. This had been our home for the past eighteen months. Here we had lived and fought in the Battle of Germany; we could not leave without one backward glance at the land once controlled by the Legions of Ceasar and the Sections of the 736th.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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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.