

18 AIRBORNE COMMAND AND CONTROL SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

28 Transport Squadron (Mail & Cargo) constituted, 19 Jan 1942

Activated, 1 Feb 1942

Redesignated 28 Transport Squadron, 19 May 1942

Redesignated 28 Troop Carrier Squadron, 4 July 1942

Inactivated, 31 July 1945

28 Logistic Support Squadron constituted, 28 Apr 1953

Activated, 8 July 1953

Redesignated 28 Air Transport Squadron, Special, 18 Jan 1962

Redesignated 28 Military Airlift Squadron, Special, 8 Jan 1966

Inactivated, 8 April 1969

28 Troop Carrier Squadron and 28 Military Airlift Squadron, Special consolidated and redesignated 18 Airborne Command and Control Squadron, 19 Sep 1985

STATIONS

Daniel Field, GA, 1 Feb 1942

Harding Field, LA, 8 Mar 1942

Westover Field, MA, 20 May 1942-7 Jul 1942

Podington, England, 28 July 1942

Aldermaston, England, 7 Aug 1942

Tafaraoui Airfield, Algeria, 14 Nov 1942

Rélizane (Galizan) Airfield, Algeria, 27 Nov 1942

Thiersville Airfield, Algeria, 13 May 1943
El Djem Airfield, Tunisia, 1 Jul 1943
Gela East Airfield, Sicily, Italy, 4 Sep 1943
Gerbini Airfield, Sicily, Italy, 28 Oct 1943
Pomigliano d'Arco Airfield, Campania, Italy, 8 Oct 1944-May 1945
Waller Field, Trinidad 2 Jun 1945-31 Jul 1945
Hill AFB, UT, 8 Jul 1953-8 Apr 1969

ASSIGNMENTS

89 Transport Group 1 February 1942
60 Transport Group (later 60th Troop Carrier Group), 19 May 1942-31 Jul 1945
Ogden Air Materiel Area, 8 July 1953 (attached to 2849 Air Base Wing)
3079 Aviation Depot Wing, 8 Feb 1955
1501 Air Transport Wing, 18 Jan 1962
60 Military Airlift Wing, 8 Jan 1966
62 Military Airlift Wing, 8 Jul 1967-8 April 1969

ATTACHMENTS

62 Military Airlift Wing 1-8 Jul 1967

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-47, 1942-1945
C-124, 1952
EC-135

COMMANDERS

Lt Col Robert L. Foley
Lt Col James L. Harcrow, 4 Aug 1955
Lt Col James S. Van Epps, 25 May 1958
Lt Col Woodland M. Styron, 1 Jan 1962

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Tunisia
Sicily
Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
North Apennines
Po Valley
Air Combat, EAME Theater

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation

28 Mar 1944-15 Sep 1944

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan 1962-31 Dec 1962

1 Jul 1965-30 Jun 1966

1 Jul 1966-30 Jun 1967

Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm

April 1, 1966-April 8, 1969

EMBLEM



28 Troop Carrier Squadron emblem: on a light red orange disc, within a border of twenty-eight yellow chain links, a caricatured brown and white donkey with yellow wings, black hoofs and eyes, having a black box strapped on back by light red orange band about stomach, leaping over a medium blue globe, marked with white land areas and black lines of latitude and longitude, resting in a white cloud formation, outlined blue, in sinister base. (Approved, 25 Nov 1944)



Emblem: Approved circa 1954



28 Logistics Support Squadron emblem is symbolic of the unit and its mission. Since the unit was stationed in the State of Utah ("The Beehive State"), a caricature of a honey bee is depicted holding up a wooden log to symbolize the 28 "Log Support" Squadron, as the organization was frequently called. The bee carries a suitcase to represent the many days of temporary duty spent by crew members and their constant preparedness to depart at any time on extended airlift missions. The bee also represents the industrious nature of 28 maintenance and flying personnel. (Approved, 6 Jan 1961)



28 Air Transport Squadron emblem is symbolic of the unit and its mission. Since the unit was stationed in the State of Utah "The Beehive State", a caricature of a honey bee is depicted holding up a wooden log to symbolize the 28th "Log Support" Squadron, as the organization was frequently called. The bee carries a suitcase to represent the many days of temporary duty spent by crew members and their constant preparedness to depart at any time on extended airlift missions. The bee also represents the industrious nature of 28th maintenance and flying personnel. (Approved, 1962)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

In combat, performed resupply and evacuation missions across Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia during North African Campaign. During June 1943, the unit began training with gliders in preparation for Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily. It towed gliders to Syracuse, Sicily and dropped paratroopers at Catania during the operation. After moving to Sicily, the squadron airdropped supplies to escaped prisoners of war in Northern Italy in October.

The unit provided support for partisans operating in the Balkans. Its unarmed aircraft flew at night over uncharted territory, landing at small unprepared airfields to provide guns, ammunition, clothing, medical supplies, gasoline, and mail to the partisans. It even carried jeeps and mules as cargo. On return trips it evacuated wounded partisans, evadees and escaped prisoners. These operations earned the squadron the Distinguished Unit Citation. It also dropped paratroopers at Megava, Greece in October 1944 and propaganda leaflets in the Balkans in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations until end of combat in Europe, May, 1945.

After hostilities ended, was transferred to Waller Field, Trinidad attached to the Air Transport Command Transported personnel and equipment from Brazil to South Florida along the South Atlantic Air Transport Route. Squadron picked up personnel and equipment in Brazil or bases in Northern South America with final destination being Miami, Boca Raton Army Airfield or Morrison Fields in South Florida.

On 8 July 1953 the Air Force constituted and activated at Hill AFB the 28th Logistic Support Squadron and its 69 officers and 357 airmen. The squadron figured prominently thereafter at Ogden in providing air transportation in direct worldwide support of special weapons equipment. Its secondary mission in air transportation covered other cargo as required when it had space available. Though the squadron ceased to be an organic part of Ogden on 6 February 1955, when AMC reassigned it to the 3079th Aviation Depot Wing, it stayed at the base as an AMC tenant and continued to perform important air transportation support for Ogden and other USAF outfits.

Over the years, the 28th flew missions primarily in the Pacific region (Hawaii, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan), but also made regular flights within the United States and occasionally flew to Europe and Australia. The unit provided airlift support to USAF elements involved in the Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962 and flew missions to South Vietnam beginning in January 1965. Between 1965 and 1969, most of its missions were flown to Southeast Asia, but the 28th also supported other U.S. operations around the world, such as in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

On 8 July 1953 the 28th Troop Carrier Squadron, an organization which had flown the Douglas C-47 Skytrain during World War II and had been deactivated by the U.S. Army Air Forces at the end of the war, was reactivated by the United States Air Force and redesignated as the 28th Logistic Support Squadron (LSS). It was assigned to the Ogden Air Materiel Area at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, attached to the 2849th Air Base Wing, and would operate the Douglas C-124C Globemaster 2 cargo aircraft. During 1955 the 28th Logistics Support Squadron was assigned to the 3079th Aviation Depot Wing. The primary mission of the 28th Logistic Support Squadron

(LSS) was to provide world-wide airlift of nuclear weapons and related equipment, with a secondary mission to airlift other Department of Defense cargo as required when space was available. In February 1962 the 28th Logistic Support Squadron (LSS) was transferred to the Military Air Transport Service and renamed the 28th Air Transport Squadron (Heavy), but it remained in its existing facilities at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

1964 2 January A C-124C 52-968, en route from Tachikawa Air Force Base near Tokyo, Japan, to Hickam Air Force Base, Honolulu, Hawaii with nine on board and 11 tons of cargo, disappears over the Pacific Ocean after making a fuel stop at Wake Island. Due at Hickam at 0539 hrs. EST, the Globemaster II is last heard from at 0159 hrs. EST. Fuel exhaustion would have been at 1000 hrs. EST and the aircraft is presumed down at sea. An automatic SOS signal is detected emanating from an aircraft-type radio with a constant carrier frequency of 4728 kilocycles, issuing an automatically keyed distress message.

Within minutes after it was learned that the aircraft was down a rescue plane was in the air. Others followed shortly. Pilots and crews, from every MATS squadron in the world, as well as our own squadron, flew 18 to 20 hours at a time. Some 550 armed forces volunteers, from all branches of service, offered to ride the planes and scan for the downed Globemaster. These volunteers gave relief to the scanners on the regular crews. Ground crews and rescue coordinators worked in shifts around the clock. The search area was completely saturated, some areas covered four and five times. In the first five days of searching, some 3000 hours of flying time were logged. Every available aircraft and surface ship was called into action to scour the ocean along the proposed track of 20968. When no clues were found, the search was broadened to include a half million square miles of ocean toward the islands of Johnston, Midway and Hawaii. Waves of aircraft, numbering as high as 70 in the air at one time, scanned the waves and swells day and night. Interspersed in the frantic hours of search and radio monitoring were reports of "distress" signals and "sightings of debris." All leads were thoroughly followed and all proved fruitless. Meanwhile, in the communities surrounding Hill Air Force Base, friends, relatives, and neighbors gathered at the homes of the families of the downed airmen. They offered consolation, hope and relayed what information was available on the search. The gigantic outpouring of sympathy and concern for the families of the men welded together the Air Force Community.

In the Pacific, surface ships still criss-crossed the ocean, searching for possible survivors or "leads." Overhead, aircraft continued to drone on in futile search for clues to the fate of 20968. Finally, after eight days, more than 500 flights and 5132 hours of searching time, the massive air-sea rescue effort ended at 0800 Mountain Standard Time, 10 January 1964. The official announcement read: "All areas of probable ditching of MATS 20968 have been searched. All leads have been checked. The absence of further information has led to the termination of the search effort." The crewmen were declared officially deceased on 20 January 1964. Three days later, the Officers and Airmen of Hill Air Force Base gathered with their families at the Hill Chapel. They there paid their last respects to Captain Thomas A. Cunningham, Captain Joseph P. Kastigar, Jr., Lieutenant Gordon C. Crandall, Lieutenant John H. Hykes, Lieutenant David D. Holt, Master Sergeant Herbert O'Malley, Technical Sergeant Francis Hiltz, and Technical Sergeant

Marvin E. Luce. These men were the crewmen on the ill-fated flight.

Hill AFB served as a support installation for the joint Air Force-Army Desert Strike maneuvers held in California, Nevada and Ariz, during this time. Its maintenance support was for the F-100 Super Sabre jets of Tactical Air Command participating in the exercise. Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine airfields from Texas to Oregon were used in maneuvers. Four C-124 Globemasters and seven crews of the 28th Air Transport Squadron participated in the exercise, hauling troops and cargo. Desert Strike was a theoretical battle over water rights which eventually engulfed more than 100,000 USAF and Army troops committed to the mythical countries of Nezona and Calonia. More than a score of tactical fighter squadrons, tactical reconnaissance and troop carrier squadrons of the two tactical air forces; units of the Air Reserve and Military Air Transport Service participated., 17-30 May 1964

As of December 1968 there were 130 officers, 741 airmen and 86 civilians.

USAF Unit Histories

Created: 15 Mar 2011

Updated: 7 Dec 2022

Sources

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

Unit yearbook. 28 Air Transport Squadron (MATS), Hill AFB, Home of the Busy Bees. 1964.

A History of Travis Air Force Base, 1943-1996. Gary Leiser. Travis Air Force Base Historical Society. Sacramento, CA. 1996.