

# 9<sup>th</sup> AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION GROUP



## LINEAGE

## STATIONS

Clark AB, Philippines, 15 Mar 1969-1 Jul 1975

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

LTC Gerald M. Noga

Col Kenneth W. Curtis, Jr.

Lt Col John G. Wilson

## HONORS

### Service Streamers

### Campaign Streamers

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

## Decorations

## EMBLEM

## EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

## MOTTO

## NICKNAME

## OPERATIONS

Mission was to maintain combat readiness to insure success of war plans and intratheater aeromedical evacuation in Pacific Air Forces area of responsibility. Later, mission area expanded to include entire Pacific Command area, north and south polar regions and east to Travis Air Force Base Ca. Mission also enlarged to include training of reserve personnel.

In 1956 the 6481st was re-designated as the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and eventually changed to the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group in 1966. The 9th AEG operated 13 detachments at the height of the Vietnam War and altogether transported hundreds of casualties on any given day and delivered a total of over 406,022 patients.

Combat operations began to end in 1973 and with that Operation Homecoming was a huge movement to get troops back home stateside. On 12 February 1973 three C-141's headed towards Hanoi, Vietnam and one C-9 headed to Saigon. All four airplanes took off from Clark AB, Philippines to begin a massive movement to start bringing home former POWs. The crews of the C-141's were largely made up of personnel from the 10th Aeromedical Evacuation Group and the C-9 was members from the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group based out of Clark AB, Philippines. The first aircraft to land was tail # 66-0177 and was later dubbed the "Hanoi Taxi". The other two C-141's circled above and landed at 30 minute increments. The first group that departed on tail 66-0177 were the most severely injured followed by the longest imprisoned, which averaged 6-8 years for the first group. Larry Chesley had been a POW for more than seven years, here is his description of that first flight. "We were met at the door by pretty young ladies, the first American women we had seen in years. We sat down in the seats and looked around. Everything seemed like heaven. Just like heaven. When the doors of that C-141 closed, there were tears in the eyes of every man aboard."

The medical crew that flew on the first mission into Hanoi on tail # 66-0177 was

Captain Linda Moore

Captain Patricia A. Mayer

First Lieutenant Joyce Fester

Master Sergeant William H. Horn

Staff Sergeant Terry L. Cole

Staff Sergeant William H. Rodgers

First Lieutenant John N. Oleson

On 4 April 1975 just 12 minutes after takeoff, what has been described as an explosion tore the lower rear fuselage apart on a C-5 Galaxy carrying infants, crewmembers and passengers. 305-319 onboard died that day. Lt. Regina Aune (retired as a Col.) was the Medical Crew Director onboard the flight and was awarded the Cheney Award for her valor during that mission. The medical crew that perished was Capt Mary T. Klinker a flight nurse from Lafayette IN, MSgt Denning C. Johnson a medical technician from Dunn NC, and SSgt Michael G. Paget a medical technician from Woodland Hills CA.

On 1 April 1975, the 375 AAW gained the 2nd Aeromedical Evacuation Group, based at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany, and the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group, based at Clark Air Base, Republic of the Philippines, (On 1 July 1975, both groups were inactivated and replaced by like numbered squadrons). With these additions, the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing became the single-point manager for worldwide DoD aeromedical evacuations services.

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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.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.