

7480th SUPPLY SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Bordeaux-Merignac AB 1952-1961

In addition to Bordeaux-Merignac AB, several other sites around the city were used by the U.S. military. The 7480th Supply Squadron and the Army Corps of Engineers operated from the downtown area. The Bacalan Ford Plant and Bacalan WWII submarine pens were used by the 126th Wing for supply storage.

To the troops in France the 7480th Supply Squadron (Exchange Service) was probably the most important unit in all of Europe! Authorized by USAFE on 15 November 1951, its mission was the establishment and supervision of Air Force Base Exchanges (AFEX) in France. This special organization was activated on 1 January 1952 and was housed and operated in downtown Bordeaux but attached to Bordeaux-Merignac AB for its support. The 7480th Supply Squadron operated from 125 Quai Des Chatrons in a commercial office building. Its first order of business was to set-up offices for civilian buyers who began arriving in December 1951. Their primary

task was procurement from French vendors and suppliers throughout Western Europe to stock the BXs in France and French Morocco. The squadron dispatched one, two, or three adventurous airmen to every new air base to set up its base exchange (BX). Exchanges were initially established in tents and then expanded into temporary buildings on each base. The 7480th's mission enlarged with the operation of the Class VI stores and all the USAFE movie theaters. By 1 October 1954, after AFEX absorbed the exchange operations in Austria, Germany, Italy, Libya, Netherlands, Spain, and UK, it was redesignated the 7480th Supply Group (Special Activities). By 1955, 1,020 French civilians were employed to operate the base exchanges; later several French workers were promoted to BX managers. The 7480th continued to operate in Bordeaux until 15 January 1955 when it moved to Mainz Kastle, Wiesbaden, West Germany, APO 633. Det #2, 7480th remained in Bordeaux for local procurement and supported the many U.S. Army exchanges in south-eastern France. Det #2 managed the large AFEX depots at Chateauroux, La Rochelle and Paris. The BXs developed into an excellent retail store system in France, supplying the troops everything from British sports cars to German furniture.

The Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, established a district engineering office in downtown Bordeaux in 1951. This office planned and contracted all construction for the U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy in the Bordeaux region. It also inspected and approved construction progress, and gave final approval for payments. French architectural and engineering firms under contract accomplished the construction design work. In January 1953 this office became known as the Joint Construction Agency Port District Office, Bordeaux.

126th Bombardment Wing, Light

A complete description of the wing's history and lineage can be found in chapter 6, Bordeaux-Merignac AB. COL William L. Kennedy was commander of the 126th Light Bomb Wing from 4 February 1952 when it was at Bordeaux, until its deactivation at Laon AB on 31 December 1952. Soon after its arrival at Bordeaux, the 126th began preparing to support the development of Laon AB as directed by Twelfth Air Force. Beginning 12 January 1952, wing and group staff officers visited the new base to determine what support could be provided by wing personnel. On 7 February the wing dispatched the AD VON, Flight "A" Provisional HQ, 126th Wing, led by LTC Hoffman with seven officers and forty-one airmen. By 1 May this ADVON had expanded to 24 officers and 210 airmen. Personnel were selected from wing HQ, air police, air installations, food service, motor vehicle, and supply squadrons. The tenant units at Laon assisting the 126th establish this new base were Flight "P" 2d Air Postal Sq operating APO 17; Det #7, 31st Weather Sq; Det #2, 1992d AACCS Sq; and Flight "B" 7480th Supply Sq. The first primitive base exchange at Laon was a one-man operation in a tent. A/2C Paul L. Garrett was sent on special order #56 from the 7480th Supply Squadron (Exchange Service) at Bordeaux on 2 May 1952 to set-up and operate the exchange at Laon.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources