

## 303<sup>rd</sup> FIGHTER SQUADRON



### MISSION

#### LINEAGE

303<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron constituted, 25 May 1943  
Activated, 1 Sep 1943  
Inactivated, 30 Sep 1946  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Medium, 10 May 1949  
Activated in the Reserve, 27 Jun 1949  
Ordered to Active Service, 10 Mar 1951  
Inactivated, 12 Mar 1951  
Activated in the Reserve, 15 Jun 1952  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron, Heavy, 8 May 1961  
Ordered to Active Service, 1 Oct 1961  
Relieved from Active Duty, 27 Aug 1962  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Air Transport Squadron, Heavy, 1 Dec 1965  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron, 27 Jun 1971  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Fighter Squadron, 1 Oct 1982  
Redesignated 303<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron, 1 Feb 1992

#### STATIONS

Sedalia AAFld, MO, 1 Sep 1943  
Alliance AAFld, NE, 15 Dec 1943  
Pope Field, NC, 26 Jan 1944  
Baer Field, IN, 2-8 Mar 1944  
Fulbeck, England, 27 Mar 1944

Weston Zoyland, England, 12 Jun 1944 (operated from Follonica, Italy, 18 Jul-24 Aug 1944)  
Peray, France, 5 Oct 1944  
St-Andre-de-L'Eure, France, 5 Nov 1944 (operated from Metz, France, 21 Apr-15 May and 26  
May-10 Sep 1945)  
Munich/Reim (later, USAF Sta Munich/Reim; USAF Sta Munich; Munich AAB), Germany, 10  
Sep 1945-30 Sep 1946  
Fairfax Field, KS, 27 Jun 1949  
Olathe NAS, KS, 27 May 1950-12 Mar 1951  
Olathe NAS, KS, 15 Jun 1952  
Grandview (later, Richards-Gebaur) AFB, MO, 3 Apr 1955  
Richards-Gebaur AFB, MO, 14 Apr 1959-17 Jan 1963  
Whiteman AFB, MO, 1 Apr 1994

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

442<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 1 Sep 1943-30 Sep 1946  
442<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 27 Jun 1949-12 Mar 1951  
442<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Group, 15 Jun 1952  
442<sup>nd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing, 14 Apr 1959  
935<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier (later, 935<sup>th</sup> Air Transport; 935<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift; 935<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift) Group,  
17 Jan 1963  
442<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing, 1 Nov 1974  
442<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Group, 1 Oct 1982  
442<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter (later, 442 Fighter) Wing, 1 Feb 1984  
442<sup>nd</sup> Operations Group, 1 Aug 1992

### **WEAPON SYSTEMS**

C-47, 1943-1946  
C-47A  
C-47B  
C-53, 1943, 1944, 1945  
C-53D  
CG-4 (glider), 1944-1945  
C-109, 1945  
L-4, 1945  
L-3, 1945  
CG-15 (glider), 1945  
T-6, 1949-1950  
T-7, 1949-1951  
T-11, 1949-1951  
C-47, 1949-1950  
C/TC-46, 1949, 1950-1951  
C-46, 1952-1957  
C-119, 1957-1961  
C-124, 1961-1971

C-130, 1971-1982  
A-10, 1982

### **COMMANDERS**

LTC Robert G. Whittington Jr., Sep 1943  
Maj Virgil M. Carroll, 1 Aug 1945  
Cpt Vernon H. Anderson, c. 18 Sep 1945  
Maj Oren K. Crum, by Jan 1946  
Maj James J. Brown, Jun-30 Sep 1946  
Unkn, 27 Jun 1949-1950  
LTC Donald J. Stoeger, 1950  
Maj Gerald M. Adams, by Dec 1950-12 Mar 1951  
Unkn, 15 Jun 1952-1954  
Maj Gordon A. Summers, by Jun 1955  
Maj John E. Lacy, by Jun 1960  
Col Walter H. Oades, by Jan 1964  
LTC David M. Hunt, Apr 1971  
Maj James H. Phillips, 24 Jul 1971  
Maj Jerry D. Oberhelman, 26 Jun 1973  
LTC Bernard B. McLean, by 1974  
LTC Larrie C. Bates, 18 Feb 1979  
LTC John M. Winslow Jr., 1 Oct 1981  
LTC Robert E. Dorrrough Jr., 18 Oct 1982  
LTC Edward E. Kirkpatrick, 11 Jun 1984  
LTC Donald B. Stokes, 1 Apr 1986  
LTC James G. Vallance, 14 Mar 1987  
LTC Jeffrey M. Musfeldt, 6 Jan 1990  
LTC Michael K. Lynch, 1 Jun 1993  
LTC Richard E. Nelson, 7 Jul 1995  
LTC DeWayne Burgess, 7 Sep 1996  
Lt Col Jeffrey L. Waller, 1 Nov 1997  
Lt. Col. David Graham  
Lt. Col. John Hoff

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

None

#### **Campaign Streamers**

World War II  
Normandy, Rome-Arno  
Southern France  
Northern France  
Rhineland

Central Europe

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

None

**Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citation

France, [6-7] Jun 1944

**Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards**

1 Mar 1976-28 Feb 1978

12-29 Jun 1979

1 Jun 1987-31 Jul 1988

1 Nov 1989-31 Oct 1991

1 Oct 1997-31 Aug 1999

**Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm**

1 Apr 1966-28 Jun 1971

26 Oct-6 Nov 1972

**EMBLEM**



303<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron emblem



303<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron emblem: On a disc Gules, a lightning flash bendwise Or, surmounted by a caricature of a young boy habited in shorts, shoes with socks, a scarf floatant fesswise to sinister and an aviator's helmet with goggles on his forehead Proper, grasping in dexter hand a shepherd's crook palewise Brown and under his sinister arm, a machine gun fesswise Gray, garnished Sable, all within a narrow border Yellow. Attached below the disk, a Red scroll edged with a narrow Yellow border and inscribed "303d FIGHTER SQ" in Yellow letters. Yellow is an Air Force color. It refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The young boy dressed as an aviator reflects the enduring spirit of the Squadron personnel in carrying out their mission. The shepherd's crook suggests the camaraderie of the members of the Squadron. The machine gun represents the aircraft and weapons systems used by unit personnel to fulfill their mission. The lightning flash represents the ability of the unit to respond in an expeditious manner. (Approved, 13 Apr 1995)

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Airborne assaults on Normandy, Southern France, Holland, and Germany during World War II. Also transported cargo, passengers, and wounded in ETO and MTO. Trained for and performed airlift missions, 1949-1951 and 1952-1982. Trained for A-10 fighter operations since 1982.

The 303d Fighter Squadron was constituted on May 28, 1943 and activated September 1, 1943, as the 303d Troop Carrier Squadron, one of four squadrons assigned to the 442nd Troop Carrier Group at Sedalia Army Air Field, now Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

The 303d, with its parent unit, was created to provide airlift support of Allied forces in Europe during World War II using cargo aircraft and gliders. Following their state-side training, the squadron arrived at Fulbeck, England, March 23, 1944, where they made final preparations for the pending invasion of Europe.

On June 6, 1944, just nine months after the unit came into existence, the 303d's assignment on

D-Day was a paratroop of the 82nd Airborne Division four hours in advance of the first seaborne landings at the Normandy beaches.

The squadron went on to participate in other major operations in Italy, France, Holland and Germany throughout the remainder of the war in Europe.

Following VE-Day on May 8, 1945, the squadron remained in Europe as part of the Occupation Forces until it was inactivated in 1946.

In 1949 the 303d TCS was reactivated at Fairfax Field, Kansas City, Kansas, with its parent unit, the 442nd Troop Carrier Wing, and assigned to the Air Force Reserve.

Following another active duty tour during the Korean Conflict, the 442nd, with the 303d, eventually relocated to Grandview Airport, Kansas City, Missouri. The airport was renamed Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base in 1957 for Lt. John F. Richards and Lt. Col. Arthur W. Gebaur, Jr., two Kansas City fliers who died in military combat.

The squadron was recalled to active duty for the Berlin Crisis in 1961 and, from 1966 through 1971, provided support for ongoing activities in Southeast Asia.

The mission of the 303d changed to fighter aircraft in 1982 when the unit received the A-10 Thunderbolt II and the unit was redesignated the 303d Fighter Squadron.

In 1991 the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommended the closure and inactivation of Richards-Gebaur AFB. It was later announced that the 442d FW, with the 303d FS, would relocate to Whiteman AFB, Missouri and, on schedule, in June 1994 the unit completed its move to Whiteman AFB.

After its return to its original home at Whiteman, the squadron deployed to Italy to support the No-fly Zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina four times for Operations Deny Flight and Decisive Edge and, with the 442d FW, received an Excellent rating during a recent Operational Readiness Inspection.

In 1998, the squadron deployed to the Persian Gulf area for 45 days to support Operation Southern Watch, the United Nation's effort to deny Iraqi military access to southern Iraq.

Making Air Force history in November of 1999, the 303d FS served in the first of ten Aerospace Expeditionary Forces. AEFs are part of the Air Force's way of managing the operations tempo associated with supporting contingency operations worldwide in a new concept called the Expeditionary Aerospace Force.

While the 303d's commitment to the AEF continued in 2000, the squadron's responsibility shifted

from Operation Southern Watch to flying Combat Search and Rescue missions for Operation Northern Watch from Incirlik AB, Turkey.

303d FS operations and maintenance members, along with two A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft deployed to Afghanistan from April to July of 2002 to take the fight to terrorists in that country following the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

In March 2003, 60 years since the 303d was first brought into existence for World War II, squadron members and aircraft were once again called to arms and deployed to Iraq to support the war effort in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The squadron made Air Force history when it became the first Air Force fighter squadron to forward deploy into Iraq, soon after arriving in the area of responsibility, and based at Tallil AB in the southern part of that country. The squadron made Air Force history again when it became the first Air Force fighter squadron to forward deploy a second time into Iraq, this time to base at Kirkuk AB in northern Iraq. The 303d returned home from Iraq in November 2003 following a highly successful eight-month deployment with no aircraft damage and no combat injuries.

The aircraft flown during the history of the 303d Fighter Squadron have been the C-47 Skytrain, the Waco CG-4A Hadrian glider, the C-53 Skytrooper, the C-46 Commando, the C-119 Flying Boxcar, the C-124 Globemaster II, the C-130A and C-130E Hercules and the A-10 Thunderbolt II.

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In October, 1982, the 442nd Tactical Airlift Wing based at Richards-Gebaur AFB, outside Kansas City, Missouri gave up its C-130ES and became the 442nd TFG as the 303rd TFS began converting to A-10s. The 442nd TFG was redesignated as the 442nd TFW in February, 1984. Tactical was dropped from unit designations on February 1, 1992. With the closing of Richards-Gebaur, on June 11 and 12, 1994, the wing moved to Whiteman AFB, Missouri.



A-10s of the 442nd were delivered in standard European I camouflage, with the A-10s in the new grays beginning to arrive in 1993. The aircraft carried KG tail codes standing for Kansas City. The tail caps on the European I aircraft were black with a gold bottom border. The new gray camouflage aircraft did not have the tail caps painted black, but did retain the gold line which had been the border. With the move to Whiteman, the 442nd 's markings remained unchanged.

During the spring of 1995 the 303rd Fighter Squadron, 442nd Fighter Wing from Whiteman AFB, Missouri, and the 46th Fighter Squadron, 917th Wing, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, were operating from Aviano AB during one of their scheduled Operation Deny Flight deployments. On June 2, three weeks into the 917th's deployment, A USAF F-16C from the "Triple Nickel" (555th Fighter Squadron, 31st Fighter Wing) at Aviano AB was shot down by a Serb SAM while on a mission over Bosnia-Herzegovina. They also were put on short-notice alert to assist in rescue efforts, should it become necessary. On June 8, two 917th A-10s escorted the Marine Corps CH-53 helicopters which had rescued Capt. O'Grady. The two A-10 covered the last portion of the egress out of Bosnia, through Croatia to the Adriatic Sea. On June 13th, the aircraft of the 442nd and 917th left Aviano AB for home.

2009 Two years of anticipation came to an end Nov. 7 when the commanders of the 442nd Fighter Wing and the 303<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron cut the ribbon on the A-10 unit's new operations building. The \$8.4 million facility was recently completed and A-10 pilots and operations support staffs are currently moving into the building, which boasts enhanced security, larger workspaces and spectacular views of the Whiteman Air Force Base flight line. The larger facility was the result of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission's decision to add nine additional A-10s and 250 more people to the 442nd FW. The 303rd FS had been operating out of office space in the 509th Bomb Wing's T-38 hangar; now the A-10 pilots in the 303rd have a place of their own. The facility was constructed with help from the Regular Air Force's 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, the host unit at Whiteman, as well as engineering, contracting and construction support provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Kansas City District, commanded by Army Col. Roger Wilson.

Air Force Reserve Command accident investigators found "convincing evidence" that pilot error led to an A-10C striking two cables protecting power lines running across Stockton Lake, Mo., during a training sortie on May 22, according to a command release. The pilot was able to return the A-10 to Whiteman AFB, Mo., despite "extensive damage" to its right horizontal stabilizer, vertical tail, and rudder; its left wing tip; and weapons and suspension equipment mounted under the left wing, states the Aug. 6 release, which discusses the findings of AFRC's accident investigation board report. The lake is roughly 90 miles south of Whiteman, where the A-10 operated as part of AFRC's 442nd Fighter Wing. Specifically, the investigators found that "the pilot's poor judgment and lapse in flight discipline" resulted "in violation of flight rules and operating procedures relating to minimum altitudes," states the release. For example, the pilot was too focused on a boat in the lake "and did not see the cables," despite his flight leader's warning, states the release. The cost to repair the A-10 was \$698,858, according to the release.

2013

Missouri Airmen, A-10s Head Home from Bagram —Marc V. Schanz Pilots and maintainers deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, from Air Force Reserve Command's 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., are returning home after concluding their combat deployment, according to a Bagram release. The Missouri A-10s began departing Bagram on Oct. 19, states the release. During the months they spent in Afghanistan, these airmen and their machines flew close air support missions as part of the 303rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. The Reservists were expected to arrive at Whiteman late on Monday evening local time, according to the wing's Facebook page. Replacing them are Indiana Air National Guardsmen and A-10s from the 122nd FW at Fort Wayne ANG Base. These approximately 300 airmen and their airplanes will constitute the 163rd EFS at Bagram. 2014

Airmen and A-10 Thunderbolt IIs from the 303rd Fighter Squadron, 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., deployed to Estonia as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Eight Warthogs and about 170 airmen arrived at Amari Air Base in Estonia on Aug. 22. The reservists will work with Guardsmen from three Air National Guard units to train Estonian forces and participate in training with Finnish air forces during the deployment. Training will focus on joint readiness and interoperability, and will include some low-level flying. Twelve A-10s and about 300 airmen from the 355th Fighter Wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., returned home earlier this month after the first A-10 theater security package deployment to Europe. TSPs help US Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa meet the demand for forces supporting Operation Atlantic Resolve. 2015

U.S. Air Forces Central Command has realigned aircraft, Airmen and assets to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, to support increased airpower requirements of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and U.S. forces tasked to carry out the South Asia Policy under Operation Freedom's Sentinel and the Resolute Support Mission. The new strategy and its supporting strategic air campaign, ongoing ANDSF and counter-terrorism operations, and the scheduled arrival of a U.S. Army Security Force Assistance Brigade, all requires an increase in Air Force capabilities in multiple mission sets to include close air support, personnel recovery, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

“As we’ve applied increased pressure on the Taliban and their revenue sources with precision airpower, we’ve gained considerable momentum in our effort to force them to reconcile or face defeat,” said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Harrigian, U.S. AFCENT commander. “As U.S. advisors move closer to the front lines in support of our Afghan partners, this additional airpower will give them the decisive advantage necessary to advance with confidence.” The additional aircraft and Airmen will fall under the geographically separated host-unit, the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, located at Bagram Airfield. In support of the increased requirement for additional close air support, the 303rd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron from Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, arrived Jan. 19, 2018, and flew their first mission within 24 hours of landing at Kandahar. The Air Force Reserve unit was previously scheduled to replace the A-10s operating out of Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve.

In addition to the arrival of the 303rd EFS's A-10s, AFCENT has also realigned MQ-9s and HH-60Gs to KAF from other deployed locations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. In anticipation of the KAF build up, AFCENT Airmen from the 1st Expeditionary Civil Engineering Group's Prime Base Engineer Emergency Force and Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational

Repair Squadron Engineer squadrons rapidly built more than a dozen structures to accommodate the arrival of additional Airmen, assets and aircraft. Additionally, deployed mobility Airmen worked tirelessly to transport more than 3,500 short tons of intra-theater supplies and material and relocated support equipment and defense systems to ensure Airmen and aircraft could effectively and safely operate from KAF. 2018

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 10 Nov 2010

Updated: 12 Feb 2018

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.