

938 MILITARY AIRLIFT GROUP (ASSOCIATE)

MISSION

LINEAGE

938 Troop Carrier Group, Medium established and activated, 15 Jan 1963
Organized in the Reserve, 11 Feb 1963
Redesignated 938 Military Airlift Group, 1 Jul 1966
Ordered to active service, 26 Jan 1968
Relieved from active duty, 1 Jun 1969
Inactivated, 1 Jul 1973

STATIONS

Hamilton AFB, CA, 11 Feb 1963
Travis AFB, CA, 25 Jul 1969 – 1 Jul 1973

ASSIGNMENTS

Continental Air Command, 15 Jan 1963
349 Troop Carrier Wing (later 349 Military Airlift Wing), 11 Feb 1963 – 1 Jul 1973

WEAPON SYSTEMS

C-119, 1963–1966
C-124, 1966–1969
C-141, 1969–1973

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

In February and March 1973, the North Vietnamese released American aviators who had been shot down and taken prisoner during the war. In Operation Homecoming, as the repatriation effort was called, the freed prisoners were airlifted to Clark AB in the Philippines before being returned to the United States for thorough medical examinations. The Air Force Reserve contribution to Homecoming included aircrews, doctors, nurses, medical technicians, general casualty assistance, and intelligence personnel. 53 Air Force Reserve C-141 associate crew members participated in five Operation Homecoming flights. Also, one loadmaster and eighteen medical technicians of the 938th Military Airlift Group (Associate) at Travis AFB participated in twelve airlift missions with active duty crews, and thirty aeromedical personnel from the 939th Military Airlift Group (Associate) at McChord AFB, Washington, served on various Homecoming legs with both reserve and active crews. Other aeromedical evacuation crew members, nurses and technicians, from the 68th (Norton), 40th (McChord), and 55th (Travis) Aeromedical Evacuation Squadrons as well as the 73d Aeromedical Airlift Squadron (Associate) at Scott AFB individually volunteered as crews on the Homecoming flights. Twenty reserve physicians also voluntarily participated in the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action, Next of Kin Program developed by the Air Force Surgeon General to counsel families of the missing and imprisoned men.

Fitting in Beef Broth units with the Chiefs' strictures, insofar as possible, General Marchbanks selected the 305th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron at Selfridge AFB, Michigan; the 938th Military Airlift Group and its collocated 349th Military Airlift Wing at Hamilton AFB, California; the 921st Military Airlift Group at Kelly AFB, Texas; the 941st Military Airlift Group at McChord AFB, Washington; the 918th Military Airlift Group and its collocated 435th Military Airlift Wing at Dobbins AFB, Georgia; and the 904th Military Airlift Group at Stewart AFB, New York, the only unit selected outside the Beef Broth listing.

The conversion process continued with the transformation of the 921st and 938th TCGs from C-119s to C-124s. The 938th had, in fact, been chosen earlier to convert but plans changed and the process didn't go into effect until 1 July under provisions set down by Special Order G-55. For the 938th, the conversion process was easier than it was for the 921st because the former unit had already begun making the necessary changes.

As the world political situation took a down-turn with the advent of the Pueblo Incident and the ever-increasing intensity of the Vietnamese War, the 349th Military Airlift Wing was recalled to active duty on January 26th, 1968.

Hamilton AFB's largest tenant organization, the "Golden Gate" Wing, shifted literally overnight from Reserve status to full-time active duty. A major arm of the 22nd Air Force, the 349th MAW

is composed of three Military Airlift Groups each with approximately 900 men and nine aircraft and handles a sizeable portion of the cargo workload west of the Mississippi. Besides the 938th Military Airlift Group which is located at Hamilton, the 349th MAW controls the 921st MAG at Kelly AFB, Texas and the 941st MAG at McChord AFB, Washington.

Travis was not to receive associate Reserve units for the 60th Military Airlift Wing until April 1970, but the pace of events in 1968 and 1969 changed this plan. The entire Reserve program was accelerated significantly in January and February 1968 after North Korea captured the USS Pueblo and its crew and the Viet Cong launched their bloody TET offensive. In the wake of the Pueblo crisis, several Reserve airlift units, including the 944th and 938th Military Airlift Groups, were recalled to active duty. MAC decided to test the associate concept by moving the 944th to Norton and having its temporarily activated Reserve squadrons assist the active duty personnel of the 63rd Military Airlift Wing there in maintaining and flying their C-141s. 25 March 1968, the first MAC Reserve associate program was officially inaugurated.

The success of the associate program at Norton persuaded MAC to revise its earlier plans and request that the 938th Military Airlift Group, along with its "parent" wing, the 349th Military Airlift Wing, become associated with the 60th Military Airlift Wing at Travis. Both units had already been called to temporary active duty in January 1968. Many of their C-124 missions to Southeast Asia were loaded at the Travis aerial port. In short, these units already had a close defacto relationship with the base.

The passing of the Pueblo crisis in 1969, with the return of its crew from North Korea, resulted in the inactivation once more of the 349th Military Airlift Wing and the 938th Military Airlift Group on 1 June 1969. In keeping with MAC's plan, they began making preparations to move to Travis in order to start training with the C-141 squadrons of the 60th Military Airlift Wing. The actual transfer occurred on 25 July 1969, when the 349th Wing and the 938th Group officially added "Associate" to their titles. The combined personnel strength of the new Reserve Associate units at Travis was approximately 500 officers and airmen and five civilians. At the time of its transfer to Travis, the 938th Military Airlift Group was composed of a single flying squadron (the 312th Military Airlift Squadron), three support squadrons (the 938th Consolidated Maintenance Squadron, 938th Supply Squadron, and 938th Support Squadron), and two support "flights" (the 938th Aerial Port Flight and 938th Communications Flight).

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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

Unit yearbook. *Hamilton AFB, CA. 1968.*

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