

65 SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

65 Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) constituted, 20 Nov 1940
Activated, 15 Jan 1941
Redesignated 65 Bombardment Squadron, Heavy, 21 Sep 1943
Inactivated, 29 Apr 1946
Redesignated 65 Bombardment Squadron, Very Heavy and activated, 1 Oct 1946
Redesignated 65 Bombardment Squadron, Medium, 2 Jul 1948
Inactivated, 31 Jan 1970
Redesignated 65 Strategic Squadron, 7 Apr 1986
Activated, 1 Jul 1986
Inactivated, 2 Oct 1991
Redesignated 65 Special Operations Squadron, 26 Sep 2018
Activated, 17 Dec 2018

STATIONS

Langley Field, VA, 15 Jan 1941
Bangor, ME, 29 Aug 1941-17 Feb 1942
Sydney, Australia, 28 Mar 1942

Williamstown, Australia, 23 Jun 1942
Torrens Creek, Australia, 15 Aug 1942
Iron Range, Australia, 13 Oct 1943
Mareeba, Australia, 7 Nov 1942
Port Moresby, New Guinea, 20 Jan 1943
Dobodura, New Guinea, 11 Dec 1943
Nadzab, New Guinea, Mar 1944
Owi, Schouten Islands, c. 11 Jul 1944
Tacloban, Leyte, 24 Nov 1944
Clark Field, Luzon, 16 Mar 1945
Ie Shima, 24 Jul 1945
Ft William McKinley, Luzon, 10 Dec 1945-29 Apr 1946
Davis-Monthan Field, AZ, 1 Oct 1946
Carswell AFB, TX, 15 Mar 1960-1 Sep 1964
Little Rock AFB, AR, 1 Sep 1964-31 Jan 1970
Andersen AFB, Guam, 1 Jul 1986
Kadena AB, Japan, 11 Dec 1990-2 Oct 1991
Hurlburt Field, FL, 17 Dec 2018

DEPLOYED STATIONS

Lakenheath, England, 15 Aug 1949-15 Nov 1949
Fairford, England, 18 Sep 1954-9 Dec 1954

ASSIGNMENTS

43 Bombardment Group, 15 Jan 1941-29 Apr 1946
43 Bombardment Group, 1 Oct 1946
43 Bombardment Wing, 16 Jun 1952-31 Jan 1970
43 Strategic (later, 43 Bombardment Wing, Heavy), 1 Jul 1986
376 Strategic Wing, 1 Jul 1990-2 Oct 1991
1 Special Operations Group, 17 Dec 2018

WEAPON SYSTEMS

B-25, 1941
B-17, 1941-1943
B-24, 1942-1945
B-29, 1946-1950
B-50A, 1948-1954
B-47, 1954-1960
B-58, 1960-1970
B-52, 1986-1990
KC-135, 1990-1991

COMMANDERS

1st Lt James H. Rothrock, 15 Jan 1941

2nd Lt James J. Hayes, 17 Feb 1942
Maj John A. Roberts, Jr., 11 Sep 1942
Maj Harry Hawthorne, 14 Jan 1943
Capt William A. Smith, 24 May 1943
Maj Daniel H. Cromer, 26 Jun 1943
Maj Joshua H. Barnes, 10 Jan 1943
Frank M. White, Dec 1943
Maj Heston McDonnell, 30 May 1944
Maj Paul B. Hansen, 8 Feb 1945
Maj Max W. Williams, 23 Jun 1945
Lt Col Richard Klein, #1948
Lt Col William F. Zimmerman, #1964

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Antisubmarine

American

Theater

Central Pacific

Air Offensive, Japan

China Defensive

Papua

Guadalcanal

New Guinea

Bismarck Archipelago

Western Pacific

Leyte

Luzon Southern Philippines

China Offensive

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citations

Papua [12 Nov] 1942-23 Jan 1943

Bismarck Sea, 2-4 Mar 1943

Philippine Presidential Unit Citation

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Aug 1960-1 Aug 1962

30 Jun 1990-30 Jun 1991

EMBLEM

B-24 era emblem: the die show the lucky numbers "7" and "11"-- and they do this while at the same time indicating both the Group (4 + 3 on two faces of the die) and SQ (6 + 5 on the other two visible die faces).



Insignia of B-17 era



Insignia of B-24 era

On a disc red, bordered black, a pair of dice tilted at an angle so that the four and three are showing on the top, and the numbers six and five are showing on the tilted front view.
(Approved, 9 Sep 1954)



65 Bombardment Squadron emblem

65 Special Operations Squadron approved, 10 Sep 2019



OPERATIONS

Antisubmarine, Dec 1941-Jan 1942; combat in Southwest and Western Pacific, 12 Nov 1942-12 Aug 1945; not fully manned or equipped, 23 Nov 1945-29 Apr 1946. From 1946-1970, the squadron participated in a series of exercises and combat simulations to maintain ability to perform long-range strategic bombardment operations. Between 1986 and 1991, served wings providing strategic bombardment and aerial refueling services in Guam and Japan.

The 65th Bombardment Squadron of the 45th Bombardment Group is perhaps one of the finest in the Air Force, if records and achievements mean anything. Formed from the old 677th and 25th Squadrons in September of 1946, the 65th quickly made a good name for itself and can now be considered an old veteran organization. Trips overseas, squadron activities and numerous outings with beer kegs has helped to form a closely knit unit. Lt. Col. Jack Cotton was commander of the newly formed 65th Squadron and since has been replaced by Lt. Col. Richard Kline. The outfit is rich in so-called "old timers," Capt. Olaf Jansen, twenty-nine years, and has it's share of rookies, Pfc. Shan Pompple, five months.

Very few months have gone by that our squadron has not led the rest in establishing the most flying and the best maintenance. Of particular interest is record of Tech Sergeants Marc and LeRoy Rose, who received ship 2304, have crewed her since commissioned in May 1946, successfully to a high that is nearing 1,600 hours total time. It is believed that this record may be the finest in the Strategic Air Command. Their ship has met every commitment and has had only one abort in its history. Master Sergeant Otto and his crew once changed an engine in nine hours including the run up. Because of its record the 65th Squadron was chosen to be the first outfit to represent the 43d Group in Japan. On every maximum effort mission, our men were 100% off the ground with but two exceptions.

In May of 1947 we went to Wendover, Utah, for ten days of maneuvers in the "field," each outfit being self-supporting. Following this jaunt off we flew to Hawaii, Kwajelein, Guam and

Japan, returning after thirty days by way of Alaska. During the lay over in Guam, over the tables of the Service Club and the Officers Club, the name "Maxie" for our squadron was born. Places were never quite the same after a visit from the "Maxie" Squadron, and many favorable comments were forwarded to headquarters concerning the efficiency and friendliness of our men. A short three weeks at home, and off again to Goose Bay, Labrador and Germany, returning through the Azores and Bermuda. A month later a week of cold weather operations was conducted at Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. During the time between these excursions and since, we have made minor trips to Bermuda, Jamaica, Hawaii and Alaska. What the future holds for the "Maxie" gang, time alone has the answer, but whenever needed, the 65th Bombardment Squadron will not only be able, but be willing to assert herself toward the achievements of all commitments asked of her. A strong, experienced unit ready for anything.

On December 27, 1960, USAF Headquarters advised the AMC that each B-58 wing would have 40, rather than 36 aircraft. Accordingly, each squadron would be assigned 12 B-58's. At that time, and throughout the forthcoming operational years of the B-58 in AF service, the assigned B-58 squadrons would consist of the 63rd (Medium), 64th (Medium), and the 65th (Medium) for the 43rd BW, and the 364th (Medium), 365th (Medium), and the 366th (Medium) for the 305th BW. Eventually, each wing would have 70 crews certified as combat ready. A normal duty assignment for a crew was between three and five years. Accordingly, the wing training program was designed to add three combat-ready crews to the wing each six-month period.

Five Australian RAAF crews joined the 65th Squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group after some initial training in Charters Towers. On 3 December 1943, a decision was made that up to 25 RAAF aircrews would be attached to the USAAF's Fifth Air Force to gain experience with B-24 Liberators as the RAAF were due to receive this type of aircraft in the near future. Five Australian crews were attached to a USAAF unit at Charters Towers. One of the more notable flights they took part in during their training was a mustard gas bombing trial on Brook Island on 21 January 1944.

B-17F, #41-24552, "Listen Here Tojo" of the 65th Squadron, went missing in cloud after a bombing mission to Lae. The wreck was eventually found in 1992 at 8,900 feet on a mountain 13 miles south west of Lae.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORIES

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Sources

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

The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.