

14 AS celebrates 60 years of outstanding, proud service

By Lt. Col. Sam Cox
14 AS commander

This month, the 14th Airlift Squadron passes a significant milestone in the history and lineage of the "Pelicans," as we celebrate 60 years as a unit and the achievement of 784,000 accident-free flying hours.

Heritage matters in today's Air Force, and many times we forget to recognize the accomplishments of those who built our great military.

Sixty years ago, our lineage began when the 14th Troop Transport Squadron was created and activated Dec. 4, 1940, at Duncan Field, Texas. The squadron flew the C-33 and C-39 aircraft. In 1942, the squadron transitioned to the C-47 Skytrain and began wearing the patch we see today.

In 1943, the squadron was redesignated the 14th Troop Carrier Squadron and moved to Pope Field, N.C.

The squadron deployed to Lourmel, Algeria, in May 1943 following the invasion of North Africa and Tunisia. On the nights of July 9-10, 1943, eight of their crews flew C-47s and dropped elements of the 82nd Airborne Division at Ponte Olivo, Sicily. The Pelicans moved further forward to

Licata, and later Sciacca, supporting the continued invasion in Sicily.

On D-Day, Pelicans dropped paratroopers and lost one aircraft to enemy fire. Later in March 1944, the squadron lost another aircraft during the airborne assault crossing of the Rhine River. Seven Campaign Streamers for verified combat and two Distinguished Unit Citations were awarded to the 14 AS during World War II.

Following World War II, the squadron assumed the role of flying C-47s at Rhein-Main AB, Germany, supporting the Berlin Airlift.

In September 1948, the squadron converted to the C-54 Skymaster and continued the Berlin Airlift until September 1949. Immediately after, the squadron moved to McChord AFB, Wash.

The Pelican's next major move was to Tachikawa AB, Japan, supporting U.N. forces on the Korean Peninsula. Their superb performance garnered them the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation. After the Korean War, the squadron moved to Larson AFB, Wash., and began flying the new Douglas C-124 Globemaster II.

By 1966, the Pelicans began flying the C-141A Starlifter and

were heavily involved in supporting operations in Southeast Asia.

After relocating to Norton AFB, Calif., the squadron's history included a very significant event. Members of the 14 AS participated in Operation Homecoming, the repatriation of American POWs in January 1973. During this period, the 14 AS was honored with 10 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards.

Over the next two decades, Pelicans flew the now stretched C-141B and participated in nearly every major contingency in the world.

In March 1992, the 14 AS moved here.

In February 1995, the Pelicans received their first C-17 Globemaster III.

The long history of the 14 AS is filled with many great events and people. Our focus today, just like 60 years ago, is to execute the mission in an effective and safe manner.

We don't ever do our mission alone. We are part of the greatest team in the U.S. Air Force. Together, thanks to all those who have been in the 14 AS, those who support our people, those who make the jets ready to fly and our fellow flying squadrons, we are an unbeatable team!



Graphic by Senior Airman Jason Smith

The 14th Airlift Squadron has flown the seven aircraft represented above.