

139th CONSOLIDATED AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

LINEAGE

STATIONS

St Joseph, MO

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

LTC R.F. Shelley, #1972

Maj John Slifer, #1973

LTC Forrest J. Edelman

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Above, Lt. Col. R. F. Shelley, 139th CAMRON commander, who has probably logged more hours in the plane than any other man at Lambert, signs the log for the last time. Maj. Bernie Coogan and SMSgt Frank Russo look on. In the photograph below, several officers and men who have served as crew members for the plane pose for a picture. Air Guard 15635, a VC-47A military version of the famed DC-3, was retired in a 15-minute final flight for newsmen from the St. Louis area and former crew members. One of 10,000 C-47s produced for World War II, it was built by Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, Calif. in 1943. After World War II, the plane served the 131st Tactical Fighter Group for 22 years as a support aircraft.

In March of 1978, over 450 officer and airmen of the 139th Tactical Airlift Group under the command of Colonel Robert G. Urquhart deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi, during "Operation Pony Express South." The purpose of the deployment was to improve the combat readiness of the 139th by accelerating flying and airdropping capabilities, small arms qualifications, and general military training facets of the mission. The Increased tempo of the mission was necessitated by the recent change in mission from air refueling to tactical airlift. POL loaded 162,700 gallons of JP-4 fuel onto eight C-130A, plus provided thousands of gallons of fuel in support of non-flying training. In terms of material to support the mission, Supply moved eight 463L pallets of aircraft spare parts weighing some 17,483 pounds. The attitude and support put forth by all 450 members was very evident and resulted in a highly successful operation. All in all, a great Summer Camp. CAMRON also brought nine pallets of materials and wheeled equipment, weighing some 47,427 pounds, to support the maintenance junction of the mission. The 139th Aerial Port Flight recovered over 60 drops weighing from 1800 to 3600 pounds each, during the two week operation. Then they transported them back to the base and repacked them for the next scheduled drops.

Three hundred eleven personnel from the 139th Tactical Airlift Group were federally activated on 28 December 1990 for six months. The first contingent left St. Joseph, Missouri on 2 January 1991 for Al Ain Air Base, United Arab Emirates. At Al Ain Air Base, the 139th TAG joined two National Guard units from Texas and West Virginia and two active duty C-130 squadrons from Germany and Korea to form the 1630th Tactical Airlift Wing Provisional. The 1630th was also named the First Desert Airlift Wing or "1st DAWG." On the 22nd and 23rd of March, the 139th TAG deployed to Al Kharj Air Base, Saudi Arabia. Al Kharj is about 40 miles southeast of Riyadh. Deploying from the United Arab Emirates to Saudi Arabia brought the 139th TAG personnel under the strict Moslem culture. Morale, which had been very high at Al Ain, was stressed at the new base in Saudi by the cultural shock and the constantly changing rotation dates for redeployment home. The 180th Tactical Airlift Squadron deployed seventy-seven aircrew members with the eight C-130Hs belonging to the 139th TAG to Al Ain Air Base. The 139th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron personnel at Al Ain employed desert procedures with normal aircraft maintenance to obtain a fantastic 98% in-commission rate. The work schedule was seven to seven for two days and then twenty-four hours off, but maintenance personnel were always on twenty-four hour call. Al Ain Air Base became a closed base soon after the 139th TAG arrived. 139th CAM personnel generally worked on their own aircraft, but the shared equipment, parts and expertise with the other guard and active duty maintenance personnel at Al Ain. A popular spare time activity at Al Ain was the construction of patios, sun decks and porches, The base civil engineers provided building material and loaned tools for these projects. Various team sports such as basketball, volleyball and baseball also provided recreation during free time. After Al Ain became a closed base, the perimeter walk became a popular event. This walk took several hours since the base perimeter was about ten miles. One of the 139th's members did have a complaint, his "Desert Diet wasn't working." Breakfast and dinner were hot meals and lunch was supposed to be a MRE (meals ready-to-eat), but lunch turned out to be a catered affair from the local Hilton hotel. There was also a Pizza Hunt, Hardee's hamburgers, and Kentucky Fried Chicken available, if so desired. Food was plentiful and good, just like home.

The 139th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron deployed 131 personnel in support of "Operation Desert Storm." Nineteen maintenance people went to Rhein Main AFB, Germany where C-130 engines and props were reconditioned and returned to the Persian Gulf. ISO inspections on C-130s were also conducted at Rhein Main Air Base. The typical work schedule was seven to seven, five days a week. The workload at Rhein Main's C-130 engine shop went from about three engines per month, before "Operation Desert Shield," to over thirty per month. During the two and one-half months the 139th's prop and engine specialists were at Rhein Main, sixty-nine engines and fifty-six props were reconditioned and tested. The 139th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance personnel at Rhein Main put together about \$400 to purchase German food and beer for their fellow Air Guardsmen at Al Ain. The several hundred pounds of food and beer were airlifted to Al Ain on one of the 139th's C-130s returning from an ISO inspection.

Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources