

821 CONTINGENCY RESPONSE GROUP



MISSION

LINEAGE

821 Contingency Response Group constituted, 17 Apr 2015
Activated, 1 Jun 2015

STATIONS

Travis AFB, CA, 1 Jun 2015

ASSIGNMENTS

621 Contingency Response Wing, 1 Jun 2015

COMMANDERS

Col Rhett Champagne, 1 Jun 2015
Col Justin H. Niederer, 5 May 2017

HONORS

Service Streamers

Global War on Terrorism-Service

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Meritorious Unit Award
1 Oct 2016-30 Sep 2017

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1 Jun-30 Sep 2015

1 Oct 2015-30 Sep 2016

EMBLEM

Approved, 16 Dec 2015

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Air Mobility Command is streamlining its contingency response force by creating a single East Coast operations group, one West Coast operations group, and an advisory group, according to a release. Reorganization of the 621st Contingency Response Wing will consolidate the six current groups (four contingency response groups and two contingency operations support groups) located at JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., and at Travis AFB, Calif., into three: the 821st Contingency Response Group at Travis and the 621st CRG and 621st Air Mobility Advisory Group at McGuire, states the May 28 release. "These internal changes provide more leadership at the [noncommissioned officer] level, better define the roles and responsibilities in the wing, and assign a single point of ownership of the equipment that the CRW needs to provide rapid global mobility," said Maj. Gen. Rick Martin, commander of the Air Force Expeditionary Center at McGuire. AMC began implementing the changes on May 28 and expects complete all realignment actions by the end of June, states the release. The realignment does not alter the 621st CRW's mission or assigned assets. 2015

The 621st Contingency Response Wing finalized its reorganization during a June 26 capstone ceremony at JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., according to a release. During the month-long reorganization, the wing inactivated four contingency response groups and two contingency operation support groups, located at JB MDL and at Travis AFB, Calif., consolidating them into three new groups: the 821st Contingency Response Group at Travis, the 621st CRG, and the 621st Air Mobility Advisory Group, both at JB MDL. "You've been reorganizing ... while getting the mission done," said Maj. Gen. Rick Martin, commander of the US Air Force Expeditionary Center, during the ceremony. "I equate that to modifying an aircraft while it's flying ... That's an incredible testimony to your leadership, to the planning, and to the execution here." A total of 17 units were inactivated and 12 new units were activated, states the release. "We now step into the future as one wing, one team, with one distinct mission executed through four distinct and integrated lines of operation—air advisors, theater command and control, air mobility, and contingency response forces," said Col. James Copher, 621st CRW commander. "Aligning together, we create a network that builds, strengthens, and executes expeditionary air mobility operations." 2015

Airmen from Travis AFB, Calif., wrapped up the largest self-contained contingency response exercise in service history on Sept. 19. The 11-day exercise, called Cerberus Strike, was hosted by airmen from the 821st Contingency Response Group at Travis and focused on landing zone assessment, airbase opening, integrated force protection, and rapid deployment of both

contingency response and Army forces. The exercise took place at five locations in California and Colorado and included multiple aircraft, including C-17s from JB Lewis-McChord, Wash.; C-5s from Travis; and C-130Js from Little Rock AFB, Ark., and Dyess AFB, Texas. Soldiers from Fort Carson also participated. 2015

QAYYARAH WEST AIRFIELD, Iraq (AFNS) -- The wheels of a C-130 Hercules touched down at Qayyarah West Airfield Nov. 11. The tactical airlift workhorse, loaded with supplies and equipment to resupply the Mosul offensive, belonged to the Iraqi air force.

The landing was much more than routine; it was symbolic. It represented the first time a fixed wing Iraqi aircraft, loaded with cargo, landed at the strategic airfield since it fell to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant fighters in 2014.

An U.S. Air Force Airman vectored the aircraft into the airspace while others marshaled in and offloaded the Iraqi C-130. These Airmen serve as some of the only ground based Air Force personnel at Qayyarah West. Assigned to the 821st Contingency Response Group based out of Travis Air Force Base, California, these Airmen are responsible for enabling and sustaining all air operations at the coalition airfield.

The airfield at Qayyarah West was recaptured from ISIL by Iraqi forces in July 2016, and has been refurbished by coalition engineers to allow the re-commencement of air operations. Qayyarah Airfield is now a vital logistical hub, opening an air corridor in support of the battle to liberate Mosul as well as operations throughout northern Iraq.

The 821st CRG is highly-specialized in training and rapidly deploying personnel to quickly open airfields and establish, expand, sustain and coordinate air operations in austere, bare-base conditions.

Encompassing 29 separate Air Force specialties, the 821st CRG provides the core cadre of expeditionary command and control, airfield operations, security, communications, aerial port and aircraft maintenance personnel for worldwide deployment to assess airfields and extend the reach of airpower.

"We are designed to go where air infrastructure doesn't exist in order to bring to bear airpower where it needs to be," said Col. Rhett Champagne, the 821st CRG commander. "No other country can bring the forces and the airlift all the way around the world to start operations with the speed with which the United States does."

upon arrival to Qayyarah West in mid-October, the 821st CRG established "airpower from the ground up," constructing command and control centers, configuring the runway to support fixed-wing mobility aircraft and de-conflicting a congested and compressed airspace.

Although the contingency response group traditionally enables the flow of fixed-wing mobility aircraft, they have continued to sustain a large contingent of rotary-wing aircraft in support of combat operations.

"The CRG is here as an enabling capability," said Lt. Col. Blaine Baker, the 821st CRG element commander. "Without us here, you're heavily reliant on ground lines of transportation. While they are heavily robust, they are a little less agile and not as rapid with their resupply capabilities as airlift is."

Baker added that coalition partners are heavily dependent on the airfield as a staging base to take the fight to ISIL and support the Iraqi offensive to recapture Mosul.

"The pre-positioning of cargo, equipment and personnel here in order to facilitate that fight is vitally important," he said. "We are very humbled and appreciative of that effort to bring in and enable the capability to get aircraft in here to bolster the supply lines to get up to Mosul in the fight against (ISIL)."

As the Air Force's contingency response experts, 821st CRG Airmen will continue to provide the role of sustaining coalition and Iraqi forces conducting counter ISIL operations in Mosul.

All air operations conducted out of Qayyarah West are in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the operation to degrade and defeat ISIL and the threat they pose to Iraq, Syria and the wider international community. 2016

Aerial porters from the 821st Contingency Response Group load pallets of water onto a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during Hurricane Irma relief efforts in Marathon, Fla., Sept. 15, 2017. Due to the environment effects following the hurricane, there was a limited supply of potable water, food and access to power. With support from the local authorities, team members delivered 10,933 cases of Meals Ready to Eat and 16,917 cases of water to the local population. 2017

A contingency response element deployed to Marathon, Fla., from Sep. 11-16. The team opened aerial port operations for Marathon, which allowed air passage for relief supplies. In total, the CRE-led joint team supported 250 fixed-wing and rotary-wing missions, and offloaded 261 passengers and 1,000,000 pounds of critical relief supplies, including critical sustainment equipment. 2017

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821st Contingency Response Group from Travis Air Force Base, California, alerted a 64-person contingency response element to Marathon Regional Airport, located in the Florida Keys, where they arrived in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, Sept. 11, 2017. Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest storms ever recorded in the Atlantic, hit Florida as a Category 4 storm the morning of Sept. 10. According to Florida officials, the hurricane tore through the state ripping off roofs, flooding coastal cities and knocking out power for millions of people. In the aftermath of devastating natural disasters such as Hurricane Irma, the 621st Contingency Response Wing is poised and ready to provide swift and coordinated relief efforts, as directed, to save the lives and alleviate human suffering. The 621st CRW is a bi-coastal, agile unit, made up of approximately 1,500 Airmen, whose forces are primarily stationed at both Travis AFB and Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey.

As requested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through Northern Command Air Operations Center, the wing deployed more than 200 Airmen to multiple locations in the Caribbean and across Florida. The contingency response forces are part of a larger Department of Defense response to support authorities in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. "We are a mission ready, mobile force that is deployable within 12

hours of notice and the Marathon mission was right in our wheelhouse,” said Lt. Col. Blaine Baker, 821st Contingency Response Squadron commander. The team departed Travis AFB within seven hours after their initial deployment notification, and landed in Marathon the night of Sept. 11, ready to perform 24-hour operations.

Contingency response forces rapidly responded with critically needed capabilities to deliver assistance and aid in the relief efforts as directed. In many cases, the 621st CRW is one of the first units to arrive to disaster locations. When the team arrived to Florida, they immediately went to work partnering with U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps teams, and started working alongside FEMA, State of Florida officials and the local community. Due to the environment effects following the hurricane, there was a limited supply of potable water, food and access to power. With support from local authorities, team members delivered 10,933 cases of Meals Ready-to-Eat and 16,917 cases of water to the local population.

“It was truly a multi-modal effort.” said Chief Master Sgt. Ronald Garbarini, 821st CRS chief enlisted manager. “We received relief supplies, processed them and then got them ready for the people in need. In the early stages, we were sending out water and food via helicopters. They flew in, picked up as many supplies as they could and then dropped them off at various points of delivery around the region.” As the roadways started becoming safe for driving, the team started sending supplies through the Army and their light medium tactical vehicles. The team opened aerial port operations for Marathon, which allowed air passage for relief supplies. In total, the CRE-led joint team supported 250 fixed-wing and rotary-wing missions, and offloaded 261 passengers and one million pounds of critical relief supplies, including critical sustainment equipment.

“Directly helping fellow Americans in need in and around the Marathon area was the best part of this operation,” Garbarini added. “Seeing the outpouring of relief supplies coming from all over the United States was also impressive to witness.” Additionally, the team partnered CRE air traffic controllers with a Florida Army National Guard air traffic control team to provide air traffic deconfliction at the airfield. Their joint efforts enabled a safe operating environment through the positive deconfliction of over 1,000 aircraft transitioning the Marathon airspace. “We hone our skills in joint training exercises like Turbo Distribution and Mobility Guardian,” Garbarini added. “One of our [621st CRW] core competencies is humanitarian disaster relief. It also helps that we have a ready, agile force, postured on alert and ready to go in a moment’s notice.”

“Operations at Marathon were highly successful,” Baker said. “It was a joint and interagency effort, and our Airmen accomplished their mission with distinction and instilled confidence in [contingency response] forces across the community and joint force.” The 821st CRG has since returned to Travis AFB and is once again postured to deploy if called upon to support relief efforts for Hurricane Maria. 2017

Air Force Lineage and Honors

Created: 29 Jul 2020

Updated:

Sources

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

Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.