

## 49 MATERIEL MAINTENANCE GROUP



### MISSION

The mission of the 49 Materiel Maintenance Group is to advise, assist and train deployed units on how to set up, operate, maintain and tear down Basic Expeditionary Airfield Resources Base sites. While the primary responsibility for this lies with civil engineer units, the 49 MMG is the only Air Force unit tasked on a daily basis with BEAR Base beddown mission support. The group's mission is to store, maintain, deploy, repair and reconstitute all of the BEAR assets (e.g., Harvest Eagle and Harvest Falcon sets) for Air Combat Command. In the past 10 years the mission has spanned the globe with deployments to support numerous operations. The group has deployed well over 850 people with more than 5,400 tons of equipment to help establish expeditionary camps in 27 different countries.

These assets are currently divided among two systems: Harvest Eagle and Harvest Falcon. Harvest Eagle assets are green in color and provide billeting, kitchen, shower and latrine support for a 550-person bare base.

Harvest Falcon assets are tan in color and consist of housekeeping sets, an industrial operations set, and initial flight line and follow-on flight line sets. The housekeeping sets provide billeting with heating and cooling, a kitchen, showers, latrines, and high-voltage power generators for an 1100-person encampment.

The Harvest Falcon industrial operations set provides base support functions and backshop maintenance capability. The initial flight line and follow-on flight line sets provide the aircraft hangars, mobile aircraft arresting systems, emergency airfield lighting systems, and additional

structures and utilities to support fighter aircraft sortie generation at a bare base. The group keeps this equipment at the highest state of readiness to support worldwide contingency operations.

The 49 MMG has other special tasks: store and deploy Twelfth Air Force counter-drug sets and Special Operations Command sets. Should the Space Shuttle land at its alternate site, White Sands Missile Range; provide recovery support. The 49 MMG has also supported the President of the United States on trips to austere locations abroad, by providing, for example, a Dome Shelter for the emergency evacuation helicopter.

To achieve the primary mission: helping expeditionary forces establish individual tent cities; technicians from the primary setup/maintenance teams break out and work with their respective specialty counterparts, helping them set up various components of a BEAR Base's infrastructure. The 49 MMG's primary teams consist of two power production technicians; two heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration technicians; two utility technicians; two electrical technicians; six structural specialists; one air-ground equipment technician; one logistical support specialist; and a team chief. In addition to their specific trades, each team member is fully trained on construction of the various flightline and industrial operations facilities.

Group members establish power plants and electrical grids, remote-area lighting systems, and water systems and plants. Because specialists work and train daily with the different systems that make up a fully integrated BEAR Base, they are able to provide excellent guidance on how to best set up each system and avoid pitfalls. Once the main tent city is under way, structural experts from the primary team begin working with CE structure personnel to guide layout and placement of the large flightline and industrial operations assets.

The rest of the team members then begin to set up the large facilities, such as HF Aircraft Hangars, HF Dome Shelters, HF Frame Supported Tension Fabric Structures, General Purpose Medium Shelters by 49 MMS BEAR Necessities and California Medium Shelters. As group members construct these different facilities, they train the expeditionary CE personnel, advising them on construction techniques and, more importantly, on the sustainment and inspection requirements necessary to ensure that the facilities can endure months or years standing and remain safe. Once these tasks are completed and the mission is into sustainment, the team chief coordinates with the CE commander and U.S. Central Command Air Forces and the team moves forward to the next beddown mission.

## **LINEAGE**

49 Materiel Maintenance Group

## **STATIONS**

Holloman AFB, NM

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **COMMANDERS**

### **HONORS**

#### **Service Streamers**

#### **Campaign Streamers**

#### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

#### **Decorations**

### **EMBLEM**

### **MOTTO**

### **OPERATIONS**

The group's contingency support in Southwest Asia has been ongoing since the start of Operation DESERT SHIELD, but with the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the deployment tempo increased significantly. In support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the group deployed eight teams to three different countries in the SWA area of operations. The BEAR Base beddown lessons learned there were invaluable for the successful buildup of bases used in OIF. In direct support of OIF, the 49 MMG deployed a total of 16 teams. CENTAF set priorities and coordinated intra-theater airlift for our teams. One of the biggest challenges was helping to establish camps that sustained, on average, more than 3,000 U.S. and coalition personnel. For the first six bases, the group averaged 20 days per beddown. From the expeditionary air bases that the group helped establish, coalition forces flew direct interdiction missions against Iraqi forces and provided support for conventional forces and Army and Marine Special Operations forces. The group worked with the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, establishing the first operational joint combat air base in Iraq at Tallil AB. CMSgt Reuben Gomez led the second team forward—they were first on the ground at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq, with the 447th ECES, successfully securing and reestablishing air operations.

Baghdad International was a crucial air hub for transiting C-5s, C-17s, C-141s and heavy commercial transport aircraft to support both the ongoing war and the growing humanitarian efforts. During OIF, two teams were deployed in the AOR for more than 150 consecutive days, to four separate countries, where we set up an unprecedented eight separate BEAR Base camps. Another BEAR Base team, lead by 1Lt Ryan Anderson helped establish beddown operations at Kirkuk AB, Iraq, a joint combat air base critical to providing close air support for U.S. and coalition ground forces. In total, the 49 MMG teams helped bed down more than 30,000 U.S. and coalition forces, set up more than \$250 million in HE and HF assets, and supported multiple F-16, F-15, A-10 and C-130 squadrons that flew more than 12,000 combat sorties. The job was grueling at times—fighting dust storms, and living in extreme heat conditions and in open K-spans with more than 400 people all around us. We primarily

survived off Meals, Ready-to-Eat, because about the time the dining facility was finally established, we had orders to move on to the next beddown site.

#### Support and Relief Efforts

- Operation Just Cause -- Panama
- Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm
- Operation Provide Comfort -- Turkey
- Operation Uphold Democracy -- Haitian and Cuban relief efforts
- Hurricane Andrew relief
- Continuing enhanced counter narcotics operations throughout the Caribbean and Latin America
- Space shuttle contingency support
- Operations Deny Flight and Provide Promise -- Croatia
- Operation Joint Endeavor -- Bosnia
- Presidential support missions to Africa and China
- Operation Southern Watch -- Southwest Asia

---

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 26 Nov 2010

Updated: 8 Aug 2023

#### Sources

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