

55 AERIAL PORT SQUADRON



MISSION

The mission of the squadron is to provide combat ready Citizen Airmen to conduct Aerial Port Operations essential to the deployment, sustainment, and redeployment of all Department of Defense operations, anywhere.

LINEAGE

55 Aerial Port Squadron

STATIONS

Travis AFB, CA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Marla A. Sandman

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM



On a blue disc within a yellow border a yellow representation of a bridge fesswise throughout in base; above is a stylized white cloud fesswise surmounted by a yellow lightning bolt bend sinisterwise, all below three ascending white aerospace vehicles bendwise one and two. Attached above the disc a blank white scroll. Attached below the disc a white scroll inscribed "THE PROFESSIONALS" in blue letters. **SIGNIFICANCE:** The emblem as a whole symbolizes the role and history of the 55th Aerial Port Squadron. The bridge denotes a type of transportation system between two points and is also symbolic of the Golden Gate Bridge located in the San Francisco Bay, the birthplace of the squadron. The gold lightning bolt denotes the speed with which the unit can respond in support of our combat forces in time of peace and of war. It also is a symbol of the adversity we must often face and overcome in our mission. The three white aerospace vehicles represent the squadron's support of aerospace operations and transportation of vital material. The white clouds represent the sky or space which most of our vehicles must transverse in transporting material. The clouds also represent the ever changing mission, equipment, and modernization and updating of procedures and practices of the Reserve forces who must meet this change or movement of technology. The emblem also displays the Air Force colors: golden yellow for the sun and the excellence of Air Force personnel and ultramarine blue for the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. (Approved, 3 Mar 1978)

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

In less than a year, the 55th Aerial Port Squadron Airmen directly moved 125,000 tons of cargo and more than 128,000 passengers in support of Operations Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel and Resolute Support. In that same amount of time, from March 2015 to January 2016, 25 members of the squadron deployed to five locations around the world, according to Senior Master Sgt. Susie Nuñez, 55th APS ramp services noncommissioned officer in charge. Aerial Port Airmen achieved this global impact through maintaining proficiency while at home station, at Travis Air Force Base.

The complexity of moving resources and people globally is intricate and requires coordination from many different areas. The five sections of the 55th APS include cargo, ramp

services, load planning, air terminal operations center and the passenger terminal. The porters in each section work together to keep the cargo moving and accomplish the mission safely. Any given piece of cargo, whether it's hazardous material or an aircraft part, is first handled by the cargo section of APS. "We're responsible for putting the pieces of cargo together," said Senior Airman Chris Beck, 55th APS cargo apprentice. "Then it gets palletized and secured." After palletization, ramp services uses 10K forklifts and the Tunner 60k loader to transfer cargo from the ramp to the aircraft.

Senior Airman Catherine Lubbe, an apprentice in the ramp services section of the 55th APS, spotted an all-terrain 10k forklift and drove the 60k loader to a static KC-10 Extender during the Unit Training Assembly for training purposes. "I enjoy being in ramp services because we get the supplies, and see where they need to go," she said. "I can see the mission happening right before my eyes." From behind the scenes, the load planning section gathers the numerical and categorical data of the cargo. It is important to know how much and what kind of cargo needs to be loaded, said Staff Sgt. Greg Manzi.

55th APS load planning. The load planner strategically plans the safest way to load the cargo. This process ensures that aircraft carries a safe weight capacity, and that hazardous materials are properly transported according to their specific requirements.

The Air Terminal Operations Center maintains communication among all the moving parts of the APS. "ATOC coordinates, communicates and oversees all the information from all of the sections," said Senior Airman James Hecht, 55th APS ATOC. "We give the aircrew the important information about the cargo, and keep the base operations informed if there are any stalls."

Passenger terminal Airmen, referred to as "Pax" in the 55th APS, screen passengers and their baggage, and weigh the luggage before loading everyone onto the aircraft.

The 55th APS cares for the transportation of Air Force people and resources. Without them, rapid deployment of expeditionary missions would be impossible. To ensure Aerial Port Airmen are well trained in all areas of the squadron, Airmen are rotated from one section to another. Mass rotations in the squadron create the need for frequent training on equipment for Airmen new to each section. This process benefits real world scenarios, such as when Manzi was deployed to a small unit in Southwest Asia. "Since there were so few of us, there was no being assigned to a specific section," he said. "We had to be able to do it all." In a recent mass rotation, Manzi was moved from ramp services to his current position in load planning. "The rotation is really helpful," he said. "You get to see the same mission from a different angle. It makes you realize how we're all interconnected, and you gain a better understanding of how to help other Airmen if an issue comes up, even if they're in a different section." "As leaders it's important that we cross-train our people so they're able to gain knowledge in different facets of their career field, so we can be ready to deploy anywhere, anytime," Nuñez said.

USAF UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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