

## 79 MOBILE AERIAL PORT SQUADRON



### MISSION

### LINEAGE

79 Aerial Port Squadron  
79 Mobile Aerial Port Squadron  
Inactivated, 1 Aug 1992

### STATIONS

Dobbins AFB, GA, 1 Apr 1972

### ASSIGNMENTS

### COMMANDERS

Col George L. Irwin, 1 Apr 1972  
Maj Joe Bingham  
Lt Col Moore  
Lt Col William P. Riley  
Maj George W. Mankel, Jr.  
Lt Col Gilbert Ellis, 31 Oct 1990

### HONORS

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

## Decorations

### EMBLEM

On an ultramarine azure disc. A vert forklift with a sable pallet of cargo is positioned at the nombril point. It rest atop a sable field which is positioned at the nombril point and occupies all positioned from the nombril point to the base of the disc. An or volant stylized aircraft ascends the sky at chief directly above the forklift. Two or lightning bolts are positioned salterwise at base. They are supporting a gules globe highlighted with sable longitude and latitude lines. The disc is bordered with or. An ultramarine azure scroll is attached below the disc. The scroll, which is blank, is also bordered with or. **SIGNIFICANCE:** Ultramarine blue and air force yellow are used in the design. Blue represents the sky the primary theater of air force operations. Yellow signifies the sun and the excellence required of air force personnel. The aircraft and the forklift represent the basic mission of the unit, moving cargo in the most proficient and economical means possible. The globe refers to the ability of the unit to carry out missions throughout the world. The lightning bolts, a symbol of speed and quickness, refers to the manner in which the unit carries out these mission. (Approved, 1 Nov 1990)

### MOTTO

### OPERATIONS

The unit's greatest challenge in 1972 was recruiting and training new members. The commander met the challenge by having 100 percent of his officers and enlisted troops ready within two years of the units activation. Training for the first five years was performed in small Quonset huts at Robins AFB, Pope AFB and Charleston AFB, and Little Rock AFB. Eventually the squadron was assigned to a hanger at Dobbins.



TSgt Harold Echols, SSgt Allen West, SSgt Wallace Ross, MSgt Robert C. Duckworth, and SSgt Stephenson Cagle talk the day's schedule over on the working ramp at Rhein Main. (USAF Photo)

The 79th Aerial Port Squadron, an Air Force reserve unit from Dobbins AFB served as the Aerial

Port Operations Center (APOC) at Eielson AFB, Alaska during the Alaskan Command sponsored joint service winter training exercise, JACK FROST 75. The 22 man unit had the responsibility for the movement of all exercise cargo, mail and personnel traveling in and out of Eielson AFB. Major Shepard N. Moore, the unit's Operations Officer, stated "it was our responsibility to manifest passenger and load and unload cargo for everything from air drops to parts for aircraft". Had we arrived here under total combat conditions, the first plane would have brought the Combat Control Team in to direct aircraft, and the next plane would have been us," remarked Lieutenant Colonel George L. Irwin, commander of the 79th Aerial Port Squadron, an Air Force Reserve unit from Dobbins Air Force Base, Ga.

This unit recently served as the Aerial Port Operations Center (APOC) at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, during the Alaskan Command sponsored joint service winter training exercise, JACK FROST 76. Working around-the-clock, the 22-man unit was responsible for the movement of all exercise cargo, mail and personnel traveling in and out of Eielson AFB.

"We worked as a regular air terminal during situations like this," commented Major Sheppard N. Moore, the unit's operations officer. "It is our responsibility to manifest passengers and load and unload cargo for everything from paratroop air drops to parts for aircraft." Spend a short time at the APOC and you will notice the "organized confusion" that is involved with loading two or more aircraft at the same time. Couple this with weather that hovers in the 20 degree below zero range and equipment that becomes balky due to the weather and you soon have great admiration for "Boone's Farm Brigade," as they jokingly refer to themselves. Working alongside the 79th Aerial Port Squadron at the APOC was Army personnel from Ft. Wainwright, Alaska, under the direction of Captain Michael T. Gilbert. Capt. Gilbert's personnel coordinated and handled the Army airlift side of the operation.

"The cooperation between both services in the APOC has been extraordinary," says Colonel Irwin, "We have been impressed with the dedication of our Army co-workers. They have been a great team to work with." Commenting on the airlift activities for JACK FROST 76, Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Sheehan, director of airlift operations in the Tactical Air Control Center, said, "The flexible response of Air Force airlift and the preparedness of reserve forces both have been proven during exercise JACK FROST 75.

"The C-130 aircrews have moved Army combat and support forces quickly and efficiently, unhampered by the arctic conditions in Alaska. "Ground turn-around times have been as little as 13 minutes from landing to take-off, minimizing exposure to the danger of aggressor fire. "Air Force Reserve personnel have planned and flown the missions, loaded and unloaded the aircraft and maintained command and control of the airlift portion of the exercise. "My education has been enriched and my respect for the Reserves confirmed throughout the exercise."



Maj George W. Mankel, Jr.

During the October UTA, approximately sixty men and women of the 79th MAP (Dobbins) were transported to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, where they faced their first test of setting up a Mobile Aerial Port complete with Command Post and cargo processing area.

Setting up pup tents and sleeping on the cold ground was a new experience for most and it was complicated by crisp cold winds from the fall flatlands of Kentucky. The MAPS contingent awoke to quite "nippy" air on Sunday and after a hearty meal of C-rations, readied everyone for the task of tearing down all that had been accomplished the day before.

The test was over, the tents were set up, comm lines had been established and the unit was able to process and load aircraft in a combat situation. The site was now disassembled and packed into the C7A Caribous for the two hour flight back to Dobbins. "The mission was accomplished despite the first time inexperience of most of our people.

Eighty two members of the 79 MAPS trained in Europe for their two weeks Active Duty. Members of the Squadron trained at Rhein Main Germany, Ramstein Germany and Torrejon Spain and Mildenhall AFB, England. Members deployed to Rhine Main and Ramstein in addition to handling normal flight traffic supported deployment phases of Operation Reforger and rotation of Brigade 76.

Excellent training experience was available. The troops were able to work at all types of Commercial Contract Flights plus C-5's, C-141's, C-130's, but no C-7's were available. Troops at Rhine Main, regular service personnel, worked v phases of passenger processing, including reservations, baggage handling, any hijacking, lost and found and distinguished visitors line and processed an average of over 700 passengers daily. Personnel assigned to Air Freight Section received actual loading experience with all types of M.H.E.

Personnel assigned to special Cargo Handling Section received excellent training in transportation and storage oi dangerous materials. SMSgt Stanley Van Meter performed duties as NCOIC of Air Terminal Operations Center and was individually responsible for the coordination of all Reforger Aircraft at Rhein Main. Similar experiences were encountered at the other bases as well. Personnel at Rhein Main traveled to Switzerland for tours of Rhein Valley, including a tour of the old castles and wineries and saw sights of Frankfurt. Personnel in Terrejon were able to take guided tours of Madrid and see some of the fine Spanish

Restaurants and Plazas.

On April 7, the 79th MAPS underwent a Military Airlift Command (MAC) Inspector General (IG) inspection. Results revealed an over- all rating of satisfactory. The administrative section accumulated an excellent.

Sixty-six personnel deployed to Elmendorf AFB, AK for their annual tour from June 17 - July 1, 1978. The 79 MAPS took command of the 616th Aerial Port Squadron at Elmendorf during the second week of their tour. This provided the members of the 79th an opportunity to train in a different environment.



Amn. Samuel White [top] and SSgt. Wes Kidd [kneeling] along with SSgt. Johnny Osborne tighten the chain lines on a pallet loaded with a Cobra helicopter. The chopper is being prepared for shipment. (USAF photo)



Members of the 79th Aerial Port Squadron down load oil drums for storage at Torrejon AB, Spain. The reservists were in Spain for two weeks as part of the summer orientation program. (USAF photo)

The 79th MAPS did a good deal of traveling this quarter to accomplish its training. Fourteen members participated in Brave Shield 18 at Charleston AFB, S.C. 18 August - 2 September 1978. The squadron sent a team to compete in the Materials Handling Equipment "Roadeo" at Robins AFB, GA on 10 July 78. They did not win, but gained valuable experience. Thirty-six members went to Little Rock AFB, Ark. in August for classroom and MHE training. The unit also gave training to 11 U.S. Navy personnel from NAS Atlanta.

From 29 July to 12 August twenty-two personnel performed two weeks annual tour at Dover AFB, DE. While there they participated in the bases ORI and were converted to 12-hour shifts. During the other UTAs in August and September the unit was mainly involved with MHE and upgrade training.

Several Air Force Reserve members of the 79 Mobile Aerial Port Squadron and the 37 Aeromedical Evacuation Group were recent participants in the now concluded joint military training exercise. Empire Glacier 80. The winter exercise, conducted from Jan. 7 to Feb. 1 in the Fort Drum, N.Y. area, provided a simulated combat situation for commanders to evaluate active duty and reserve forces in joint air and group operations. Food service specialists from the 94th CSG also took part.

The exercise simulated a full spectrum of conventional and un-conventional warfare operations that are likely to be used by U.S. forces in worldwide crisis situations and about 12,000 people were involved in Empire Glacier 80, of which about 9,000 were Army and 3,000 Air Force. Approximately 10 percent of the Army and 50 percent of the Air Force participants were reserve component forces.

On March 14, 40 members of the 79th MAPS deployed with field gear on three C-7 aircraft to Pope AFB, N.C. in order to train with the 3rd MAPS. Led on Capt. John A. Ritner as troop commander and assisted by Capt. Joc B. Bingham, the effort was a prime example of a combat ready reserve unit prepared to deploy as required. Specialized hands-on training included M-series Jeep, 2 ½ top trucks, tractor trailer, tactical loaders and 40K aircraft loaders. In addition, actual tic down of rolling stock on C-130 aircraft was performed and Air Terminal Operations Center orientation was received.

79 MAPS provided 17 members to train with the 3 MAPS at Pope AFB, NC for Exercise GALLANT EAGLE 82, from 3 to 17 Apr 82. The team leader was MSgt Donald L. Harris. Working three shifts, they worked around the clock on 60 C-130s, 59 C-141s and 24 C-5s, handling over 2230 tons of cargo and 4800 passengers

Seventeen members of the 79th MAPS recently returned from Pope AFB, N.C. where they augmented active duty personnel during Exercise Gallant Eagle '82. Working with the 3rd MAPS over three shifts, the small 79th contingent had personnel available around the Clock." Busy was not the word for the daily activity," according to commander Maj. George Mankel. "In the two weeks at Pope, the 3rd MAPS with the 79th people covered 60 C-130s, 59 C-141s, and 24 C-5s. We off loaded more than 2,230 tons of cargo and processed about 4,800 passengers.

Cargo loads included jeeps, gamma goats, 40-foot trailers, tractors, bulldozers, ton and- a-half trucks, helicopters, palletized cargo, ambulances and miscellaneous exercise material. "It was a perfect example of what the 79th would be able to do it where ever mobilized," said Mankel. Gallant Eagle was supported by the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C. As part, of a U.S. Readiness Command test of the desert capability of the Rapid Deployment Force, more than 26,000 paratroopers were airdropped. Approximately 6,000 members of the Reserve and National Guard Look part. Team leader for the 79th MAPS deployment MSgt. Donald L. Harris said, "We're ready to go back to Pope and work with the 3rd MAPS anytime. Our group was highly motivated and felt they made a valuable contribution To the exercise.

26 May to 9 June 84, 100 members plus three officers went to Charleston AFB, SC. We were given great support in Cargo Processing, Ramp, ATOC, Special Handling, Fleet Service, Traffic Control and Unit Training. The members of the 437 APS were great trainers and there was continuous cooperation between the three units. (437 APS, 79 APS, 38 APS) The exercise called Patriot Partners tested the capability of the Reserves to man, operate and manage a fixed Aerial Port. We worked three shifts seven days per week shipping 1132 tons of equipment, boxes, and baggage and 8447 passengers. We built 634 pallets. The 18 hour MAC standard for cargo processing was cut in half for an overall average of 8.9 hours.

A mobility exercise was conducted 13 April and 28 April 1984 at Dobbins AFB. All Wing units at Dobbins (with the exception of the 79 APS and 80 MAPS) were tasked for the April 13th exercise, with 3U9 members and 45,158 pounds of cargo scheduled to be processed. The 79th and 80th were not involved as they did not pull their UTA with us that weekend. They were, however, involved during the 28th exercise, during which 77 persons were process with 15 of the 80 MAPS members actually deploying to Panama. The exercise was for personnel

processing only; no equipment was tasked. Fifteen members of the 79th Aerial Port Squadron performed their annual tour at Charleston AFB, SC, from 14 Sept to 28 Sept. Training was received on the 40k loader, the 10k forklift, and a warehouse tug. The more than 50 aircraft worked on by the airmen included the C-5, C-141, L-100 and L-188. More than nine tons of cargo were lifted with the assistance of the reservists. The participants rated the facilities and cooperation of their host unit, the 437th APS, as being excellent.

**Active Duty Tours:** Fifteen members of the 79 APS went to Charleston AFB, S.C. for annual tour from 14 Sep to 28 Sep 85. The learning center was utilized for 6 courses of instruction. One person trained on the 40K loader, one trained on the 10K forklift and one trained on the warehouse tug. Our members worked on 1 C-5, 22 C-141s, 17 L100s and 12 L-188s. The training, cooperation, facilities and food were rated excellent at our host squadron, the 437th APS. **Events:** Fifteen members went on a flyaway to Charleston AFB, S.C. from 27-29 July 85 for hands on training in special handling and MHE.

1986 The 79 APS completed classes on the 10K forklift, special handling, ramp and mission forecasting procedures. Forty members of the unit went on a flyaway to Charleston AFB, South Carolina. Twenty-two members completed annual tour training at Robins AFB, Georgia, from 21 Jun to 5 Jul 86. Six unit members deployed to Lajes Field, Azores, for hands-on aerial port training from 21 Oct to 22 Dec 86.

1986-1987 Members of the 79th APS were also very active in unit training. Members received training in cargo tiedown restraint training, aircraft load pulling, information and communication control procedures and Storage of hazardous materials. Five members of the unit went TOY to Dobbins AFB to attend a 5 day class called "Airlift Planners Course". The unit also deployed to Fort Campbell Ky for exercise "Purple Falcon". The main job of 79 APS personnel was to help with passengers, and baggage and aircraft loading and unloading training was also received.

1988 Fifteen members of the 79th Aerial Port Squadron, Dobbins AFB, Ga., were deployed to Howard AFB, Panama, Sept. 12-24, to contribute to the humanitarian effort in aid following the devastation of Hurricane Gilbert in Jamaica. TSgt. Malcolm Favours, 79th APS, said, "I coordinated with the Army Intelligence Command in bringing trucks of supplies with the Air Force's cargo planes through air traffic operations. Technical Sergeant Gerry China handled cargo processing with his crew while Tech Sergeant Jim Leverette was in charge of ramp operations." The C-130 aircraft and crews participating in the disaster relief were from the Military Airlift Command's 314th Tactical Airlift Wing, Little Rock, AFB, Ark., and the Air National Guard's 118th Tactical Airlift Wing, Nashville, Tenn. The first of four flights of C-130s left Panama loaded with 10 chain saws and 14 tons of plastic sheeting for temporary shelters. The second plane was loaded with 18 rubber water tanks each capable of carrying 300 gallons of water. The other planes carried 200 tents, 4,000 5-gallon water jugs and 10,000 cotton blankets.

Members of the 79th Aerial Port Squadron, Dobbins AFB, Ga., performed their annual tour at Robins AFB, Ga., working with the 2895th Distribution Squadron, June 11-24, 1989. While there



they helped to move more than 13 tons of cargo throughout the southeast. Some of the aerial porters gained valued experience as they transferred and loaded explosives onto cargo planes. Another advantage having worked with the unit at Robins AFB is the computer controlled tracks that are used there to transport boxes. Most bases still use forklifts to move boxes.

After 20 years of service at Dobbins ARB, the 79th Aerial Port Squadron has merged with the 80th Mobile Aerial Port Squadron in a recent unit change. The result is the development of the largest mobile aerial port squadron in the Air Force Reserve with 255 members in one squadron. "This is the first time an aerial port unit of this size has been established," said Lt. Col. William Hearnburg, 80th MAPS commander. "It's something that has never been done before. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity of working with this super squadron and the challenges involved with a unit this large," Hearnburg continued, noting that the merging of the two outstanding squadrons will only make them better. "Members of the 79th APS and 80th MAPS bring together a proud heritage of excellence and dedication. "During its history, the 79th APS had five different commanders and changed from an aerial port unit to a mobile aerial port unit and back again, according to TSgt. Albert Johnson, unit public affairs representative of the former 79th APS.

---

USAF UNIT HISTORIES

Created: 4 Sep 2010

Updated: 16 Nov 2021

Sources

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