

7 MOBILE AERIAL PORT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

7 Aerial Port Squadron
Redesignated 7 Mobile Aerial Port Squadron

STATIONS

Tachikawa AB, Japan
Kunsan AB, South Korea, 30 Jun 1971-1 Nov 1973
McChord AFB, WA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

Jan-Jun 1961

May 1963-Mar 1964

Jan 1965-Dec 1966

Jun 1967-Jun 1968

EMBLEM



MOTTO

OPERATIONS

Newly established aerial port detachments operated in early 1962 at Tan Son Nhut, Da Nang, and Pleiku, manned with personnel from the Japan-based 7th Aerial Port Squadron. Elsewhere in Vietnam, cargo handling depended largely on the resourcefulness and energy of the aircrew and local personnel. A team of senior PACAF officers determined in April that at many sites supplies were "constantly being misplaced or lost." At Nha Trang, for example, an Air Force

communication team commander felt obliged to meet every incoming aircraft to assure that his supplies reached him.

Three port detachments were added during the spring; two in Thailand and one at Nha Trang. At the six ports, operations were hampered by equipment and facility limitations. Critical shortages "affecting the mission" were listed and the assets of the entire theater screened. Forklifts, used for moving and hoisting loads into the rear doorway of the C-123s, frequently broke down under heavy usage; repairs usually depended on the resourcefulness of inadequately trained mechanics at the scene. Aircrews often complained of errors in the weight of cargo shown on loading documents, a potential cause for major accidents.

They can parachute, fight, direct air traffic, control and mark drop, landing and extraction zones and operate and repair radios. It's a special breed of airmen who wear the blue beret.... singling them out as Combat Controllers. At Mactan two of these specially trained experts aid C-130 crews to qualify in the Container Delivery System. SSgt. Phillip Morris and A1C Ulysses Miller, 7th Aerial Port, Naha AB, Okinawa, are helping to make it possible Photos by A1C Butch Wilson for the 463d Troop Carrier Wing to be the first operationally qualified unit in the use of CDS. To accomplish their task, Sergeant Morris and Airman Miller begin their day attending the air crew briefing.

Conducted by a CDS qualified C-130 pilot, the 20 minute briefing familiarizes the pilots and navigators as to their routes, altitude, speed, time over target and type of drop. The Combat Controllers attend the meeting to clarify any questions that might arise concerning the ground markings, point of impact or any zone information. After the briefing is concluded, Sergeant Morris and Airman Miller head for the drop zone, located Northeast of the runway. The two specialists then place cerise and orange 2' x 8 feet panels in the zone. Seven panels mark the release point at the leading edge of the zone two of them at the point of impact. Next the Combat Controllers check out their radio equipment, consisting of UHF and VHF frequencies.

The radios are housed in a specially built truck with high voltage transmitters and receiving units. Another necessity at the zone is recording the wind direction and velocity. During the Mactan CDS missions two 463d TCW aircraft make two practice runs each for familiarization with the zone. Then, after the flight crews are satisfied with their practice runs, each aircraft flies a 30 minute pattern and final approach. When the first aircraft is 10 miles out the pilot radios the Combat Controllers and the Mactan tower for clearance at five miles out Sergeant Morris will either give the clearance or adjust the time on target. During the final minutes of the mission the controllers provide wind information for the drop. If the controller happens to sight any aircraft in the area he notifies the pilot.... at Mactan, air traffic is controlled by the tower.

When the aircraft is approximately one-and-a-half minutes out Airman Miller throws a smoke bomb, either yellow or white for go, or red for cancel, in the impact area. The smoke gives the navigator a chance to make any last minute adjustments. After the first container hits the ground Airman Miller rushes over and paces the distance from the point of impact to the unit. Release of the six containers is made at 750 feet.... the Combat Controllers have done their job....Every two weeks 7th Aerial Port rotates its TDY Combat Controllers to Mactan, but the 463d TCW crews can be assured that Sergeant Morris' and Airman Miller's team members at Naha are all professionals.



Airman Miller adjusts special panel marker.



Sergeant Morris (right), Airman Miller aid C-130 pilots.

Det 1 Naha, Japan
Det 6 Itazuke, Japan
Det 7 Kunsan, South Korea
Det 14 Kimpo, South Korea
Det 27 Misawa, Japan
Det 55 Osan AB, South Korea

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE UNIT HISTORIES

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Sources

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