

# 8<sup>th</sup> EXPEDITIONARY AIR MOBILITY SQUADRON



## MISSION

## LINEAGE

8<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron

## STATIONS

Kandahar, Afghanistan

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

## EMBLEM

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Mobility airmen at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, finished the air leg of a multi-modal equipment swap-out between the Army's 1st Combat Aviation Brigade and 3rd CAB. During the nearly three-week effort in August, C-5As from JBSA-Lackland, Tex., and C-5Ms from Dover AFB, Del., airlifted more than 120 helicopters between Kandahar and Western Europe. The deployed aircrews worked with members of Kandahar's 8th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron, Det. 1 to complete the task. "A lot of advance planning made any obstacles we encountered minor and manageable," said Capt. Rob Cross, 8th EAMS aircraft maintenance officer. 2013

AL UDEID AIR BASE, Qatar (AFNS) -- The C-17 Globemaster III is a versatile aircraft in high demand across the globe. The airframe is used to haul cargo, transport passengers and medically evacuate wounded service members. The 8th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron maintenance team at Al Udeid Air Base helps keep the base's C-17 fleet mission ready by performing regular maintenance on each aircraft. The unit provides the only tier two C-17 maintenance capability in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility with the ability to replace engines and perform fuel cell work. "Our goal is to maintain our C-17s so they're ready to go at a moment's notice," said Senior Airman Matthew Vanderbosch, a 8th EAMS C-17 crew chief from Buffalo, New York. "We need to make sure the aircraft is crew ready. We configure the cargo bay for each mission, inspect everything on the aircraft and call in specialists, as needed, to fix problems quickly."

Conducting preflight inspections is one of the many responsibilities of 8th EAMS crew chiefs. During inspections, nearly a half dozen crew chiefs inspect every system on the aircraft, Vanderbosch said. "We inspect the interior and exterior of the aircraft, all lights, computer systems, hydraulics, every brake and tire ... everything," said Staff Sgt. Robert Hill, a 8th EAMS C-17 crew chief from Helena, Montana. "Each inspection consists of hundreds of items." Ensuring the C-17, an aircraft called upon to evacuate 80 U.S. Embassy personnel from Yemen in February 2015, is mission ready is vital, Hill said. "Everything we do here has an impact. Every time we support a jet launch we're making things happen," Hill said. "Whether it's moving passengers across the AOR, delivering munitions or delivering humanitarian aid like water, blankets or food to people in need; we are here to support all of that." One day, Vanderbosch was informed of a C-17 waiting to takeoff to transport wounded Soldiers out of Afghanistan. The aircraft was fueled up, the pilot was ready to start engines and the aeromedical evacuation crew was ready to go. However, there was one problem -- two tires needed to be replaced. "Without hesitation, a team of us went out to the jet, jacked it up and replaced the tires," Vanderbosch said. "Behind every flight crew, there's a team of crew chiefs and specialists ensuring they can do their jobs, because if we don't do our jobs, the flight crews can't do their jobs. "Knowing we were able to help bring those Soldiers home and get them the care they needed ... being a part of that, was pretty cool," he continued. During his time at AUAB, Vanderbosch said he's replaced C-17 brakes, lights and more tires than any other time in his Air Force career. The 8th EAMS maintainers perform maintenance actions on a routine basis in an effort to ensure assets are available at the time of need, Hill said. "We track the maintenance needs for every aircraft; we assign people as necessary, perform our inspections and focus on preventative maintenance so we take care

of problems before they arise,” Hill said. The 8th EAMS currently has a logistics departure reliability rate of nearly 93 percent. That means for every 10 aircraft assigned to missions, nine take off on time. The LDRR is one of many achievements made possible by the hard work of the 8th EAMS maintenance team, said Capt. Danielle Rogowski, a 8th EAMS maintenance operations officer from St. Cloud, Minnesota.

“Our guys understand the importance of what they’re doing and they see the impact of what they do every day,” she said. “When a C-17 is transporting service members across the AOR or when someone needs to get medevac’d out, that’s possible because of the work my Airmen do.” Rogowski said she’s impressed with the dedication her Airmen bring to the mission. “I’m so proud of our people, to do what they do every day in extreme heat; I’m having to pull them off of stands to take breaks because they won’t stop. If something is broke, they won’t stop until it’s fixed,” she said. “To display such tenacity, that’s impressive and they bring that tenacity every day. They come here ready to go, focused on getting the mission done.” In 2015, the 8th EAMS supported more than 1,700 sorties delivering nearly 24,000 tons of cargo and more than 9,000 people to locations across the CENTCOM AOR. 2016

The 8th EAMS expertise in transportation and logistics enable them to inspect, temporarily store and load cargo such as munitions, blood, special operations cargo, hazardous materials, vehicles and medical supplies. Cargo waits as Airmen with the 8th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron prepare to offload it at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, Dec. 24, 2016. The 8th EAMS Airmen work round the clock to ensure cargo is loaded and offloaded in an expedient manner. “You need it, we move it.”

That is the saying of Airmen with the 8th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron who enable rapid global mobility every day at Al Udeid Air base, one of U.S. Central Command’s busiest en route stations. “We are the middle man for the area of responsibility, and everything goes through this port,” said Master Sgt. Kelly Lemke, air freight superintendent with the 8th EAMS. “Rapid movement is what keeps us in the fight. Without us, cargo doesn’t move and personnel can’t travel.” Lemke explained the 8th EAMS’ primary mission is to load cargo onto the C-17 Globemaster III, but because of their expertise in transportation and logistics, they have become more and more involved in supporting the majority of aircraft here.

The 8th EAMS knowledge in transportation and logistics enable their ability to inspect, temporarily store and load cargo such as munitions, blood, special operations cargo, hazardous materials, vehicles and medical supplies. Their ability to also rapidly move cargo has given them a larger tie to theater operations impacting battlefield personnel. “As a tenant unit, we mostly maintain ourselves operation-wise,” said Lemke, “but with our specialized skills we hope to establish ourselves as a partner [in wing operations] rather than just a tenant.”

Those same skills allow the 8th EAMS to also support coalition partners with their air missions. Recently, they worked together with other agencies on base supporting missions critical to operations in Mosul, Iraq, including those impacting the posture of ground forces. During November of this year, Airmen of the 379th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron were tasked with supporting Mosul operations by expeditiously gathering, organizing and palletizing more than 19 tons of fire retardant foam and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense equipment.

“There are always surprises in the military,” said Staff Sgt. Mark Majack, sealift coordinator with the 379th ELRS. “I went from my daily routine to leading a team into palletizing almost 45,000 lbs. of fire extinguishing foam and 1,000 gas masks.” With the support of the 8th EAMS, the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing expedited those 19 tons of equipment in support of Operation Conquest. That same partnership backed the Mosul offensive by also quickly shipping 11,000 lbs. of special operations equipment and more than 19,000 blood units, saving 107 patients. The cargo supporting U.S. and coalition forces was on its way only 12 hours after the initial tasking, a showcase of 8th EAMS mantras of velocity and tenacity.

“It is all just a matter of knowing what is coming in to the port, knowing what needs to go out and then matching that all up,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Sanders, a capability forecaster with the 8th EAMS. “If things get hung up in one spot, it creates a ripple effect.” To prevent such hang ups, the diverse Airmen of the squadron do everything from tier two aircraft maintenance, command and control of Air Mobility Command aircraft and mission tracking, to loading and unloading equipment, and even servicing aircraft washrooms. With a steady focus on flexibility and tenacity, Airmen of the 8th EAMS work around the clock to bolster the U.S. Air Forces Central Command and AMC missions.

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Air Force Order of Battle

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Sources

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