

653 COMBAT LOGISTICS SUPPORT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

653 Combat Logistics Support Squadron

STATIONS

Robins AFB, GA

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Joseph Giuliani

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

Squadron members deployed to Pope AFB, NC to repair a C-130 and a C-141, 1993/1994

Squadron members deployed 13 members to Antarctica to rescue an LC-130H lodged in a 134 feet crevasse. 30 Nov 1998

Deployed to Egypt to repair an Egyptian C-130.

Squadron members aided in recovery of wreckage of a Honduran C-130 and assisted safety investigation board in inquiry of crash.

The 653rd Combat Logistics Support Squadron has traveled around the world putting Air Force birds on the mend for the past 40 years. From Dover, Del., to the Middle East, the unit's nearly 300 men and women have shown their expertise in repairing aircraft of all makes and models, all in the name of top-notch warfighter support. The unit, which started out at Robins as the 2955th CLSS in December 1967 and was renamed the 653rd CLSS in October 1992, will close up shop in a multi-phase process which begins this summer and is scheduled to end in 2009. According to Maj. Paul Kanning, 653rd CLSS commander since June 2005, the squadron's end comes as the Air Force restructures its approach to warfighter support under the knife of budget cuts. "It originated with Program Budget Decision 720 cuts," he said.

"Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command identified each of the combat logistics support squadrons at each air logistics center as areas for cuts. They took their first look and based upon workload said, 'Yes, we can definitely move some people from there.'" Major Kanning said more specifically, Airmen in supply and transportation areas of squadrons as well as the maintenance capability would be cut by a sizable proportion. After taking a second look at the situation, AFMC determined a need to find another way to meet the mission, an ongoing process according to the major. Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., recently hosted a Lean event to plan an enterprise-wide standard on how depot maintenance support will be provided to the field, Major Kanning said.

"For our squadron, the plan is to close in September of 2009," he said. "That begins this summer with supply and transportation. These folks will be leaving here this summer. They'll undergo a permanent change of station assignment, or be reassigned somewhere else on base." Airmen moving to another unit on Robins could become part of the Air Force Reserve Command, the 116th Logistics Readiness Squadron or the 78th Logistics Readiness Squadron. Those who are PCSing most likely will go to Scott AFB, IL; Langley AFB, Va; and the Joint Personal Property Office in Colorado Springs, Colo. Major Kanning said many individuals have already been notified about their next assignment and will PCS by Aug. 20. The decision to move across Robins or to another installation is based on how long the person has been at Robins, regardless of their parent command. The change comes as the Air Force works to reinvest its funds in new weapons systems, Major Kanning said.

The Air Force on Aug. 5 plans to inactivate the 653rd Combat Logistics Support Squadron, the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center unit that has a 42-year history traveling around the world to repair aircraft that have suffered combat or crash damage, but the mission will continue with a smaller workforce-down from more than 300 people to 56-and as an expeditionary depot maintenance flight at the ALC in Georgia. "We are going to change in size and name, but we are going to retain the capability," said Maj. Joseph Giuliani, 653rd CLSS commander, remarking that current and former members have "always been a highly skilled, highly trained, well-organized unit." USAF had five such units but has been inactivating each one, and the last one at the Ogden Air Logistics Center in Utah will go in October.

8/6/2009. Starting with Vietnam and ending with Iraq and Afghanistan, the White Knights of the 653rd Combat Logistics Support Squadron have traveled the globe to repair major damage on aircraft in combat zones. But their storied 42-year history came to an end Wednesday with an inactivation ceremony. Originally called the 2955th CLSS, the unit became the 653rd CLSS in 1992 as part of an Air Force-wide reorganization. It was slated for inactivation two years ago as part of a move to shift from large CLSS squadrons to smaller flights that do the same job. Once it had over 300 people, but now 56 White Knights will form the Expeditionary Depot Maintenance Flight in the 402nd Aircraft Maintenance Group. "

This is a historic and emotional day for our Air Force," said Col. John Bukowinski, commander of the 402nd AMXG. "CLSSs have played a key expeditionary role in our Air Force over the last 42 years, specializing in providing aircraft repair in a combat environment." The ceremony included several past commanders of the squadron and other alumni. Maj. Joseph Giuliani, the commander of the group since January, 2008, noted that despite the pending inactivation, members of the group have continued to do their job around the world. In the past year, he said, White Knights have performed 100 TDY taskings with 30,000 labor hours, saving the Air Force \$4 million. "Today's inactivation is bitter-sweet because we are all sad to see the doors closed on such a historic squadron, but at the same time this occasion gives us an opportunity to see the faces of former CLSS members, many of whom traveled great distances to be here today."

An alumni dinner was also held at the Museum of Aviation on Wednesday night. Members of the squadron were called the White Knights because the chess knight was the unit emblem. The knight represented the unit's mobility and unique capability. At one time there were five combat logistics support squadrons, with each air logistics center having one to support the aircraft assigned to that center. After the 653rd inactivates, the only CLSS left will be at Hill Air Force Base in Utah. That one is scheduled for inactivation in October. Colonel Bukowinski said closing the CLSSs is an unfortunate result of the Air Force's budget conditions, but he emphasized that the mission of performing major field repairs will continue.

Air Force Lineage and Honors

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Sources

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