

2951 COMBAT LOGISTICS SUPPORT SQUADRON



MISSION

LINEAGE

2951st Combat Logistics Support Squadron activated, 1 Dec 1967
Inactivated, 1 Oct 1992

STATIONS

McClellan AFB, CA, 1 Dec 1967

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj H. Barbee, Jr., 1967
Lt Col C. Phillips, 1969
Lt Col F. Cirillo, 1971
Lt Col R. Redding, 1974
Lt Col J. Reynolds, 1977
Lt Col R. Romano, 1980
Lt Col H. Grounds, 1981
Lt Col C. Cunningham, 1983
Lt Col P. Lambert, 1983
Lt Col J. Price, 1986
Lt Col J. Weaver, 1988
Lt Col L. Calahan, 1991

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

1 Jan 1969-31 Dec 1970

1 Jan 1971-31 Dec 1972

1 Jan 1973-31 Dec 1974

1 Jan 1975-31 Dec 1977

1 Jan 1977-31 Dec 1978

1 Jan 1979-31 Dec 1980

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

The 2951st Combat Logistics Support Squadron was activated with about 250 officers and enlisted members.

In August 1990 the squadron was put to the test with the onset of Operation DESERT SHIELD. As the situation evolved into Operation DESERT STORM, over 150 maintenance, supply, and transportation personnel were deployed to the Middle East, to sustain the war-fighting effort.

During the Gulf War, McClellan's 2951st (later 652nd) CLSS sent two ABDR teams to King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and to Al-Jawf in Saudi Arabia. Called forward operating locations (FOL) 1 and 2, respectively, and supported by a main operating base (MOB) at King Fahd International Airport near Riyadh, the two sites were just miles from the Iraqi border. Some aircraft were inevitably lost due to action over Iraq, but most were repaired and returned to fly, fight and win, due in large measure to the skills of McClellan's ABDR teams. The teams are so good, in fact, that the 2951st/652nd has earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for virtually every year it has existed since 1967. They are true heirs to the 2nd Air Depot Group of World War II and the RAM teams of Vietnam. SMSgt Brian Beebe, the A-10 ABDR team chief deployed to FOL 1, 1990-91, recalls the desert conflict

"The A-10 has a 24-person ABDR team composed of engine, aircraft general, structural, electrical, guidance control, and egress specialists. They are supported by a host of other specialists, making for an integrated team. The capstone to the team is the engineer, who deploys with us, makes necessary structural decisions, and offers engineering assistance. The engineer, as the senior officer, essentially commands the team until we get in theater, then the team chief takes over to run the day-to-day ABDR operation. At our FOL during the Gulf War, we had a unique opportunity

having just one engineer-Captain Phillip J. Idle from the Aircraft Management Directorate-with our one ABDR team. The team did the work and Captain Idle would act as consultant, in addition to helping us in the arm and dearm area to recover aircraft. He was basically a technician when we didn't require his engineering expertise.

"We left for the desert in August 1990. Our mobilization through the McClellan processing line went very smoothly, including getting all of our medication and shots. FOL 1 was bare base, and our mobility gear was not set up for the desert. Things like sun block, thirst quenchers, dehydrated foods, extra soap, additional shower gear-we had not thought of those types of *Adapted from SM-ALC Oral History #8, "A-10 Aircraft Battle Damage Repair in Operation Desert Storm," (SM-ALC Office of History, 1 October 1991).

things. We also learned what it was like to be in a barebase operation-where the latrine was; where your drinking water was; where your food facilities were; what arrangements were available to us as far as hot meals or MREs (Meals Ready to Eat). We found out the importance of basic necessities-like toilet paper. For example, you absolutely needed a set of dust goggles for all conditions. There was no way we could anticipate how much dust would get into everything. We also learned we had to put our clothes and other items in zip-lock bags to keep the dirt out. For drinking requirements, our logistics personnel looked at the type of chemical gear we used. I think they went on the premise that we would be in full gear 24 hours a day. And we did spend an extended time in our chem gear. We slept in it and worked in it 10-12 days at a time. Then we'd swap suits.

"Communication was critical, especially under attack. You needed to know when and how to respond, to know when to go into the bunker. However, we had a problem with communication between where we worked and where we lived. At FOL 1 our living quarters were 12 miles from the work area. Depending upon where you were, sometimes you would hear an alert over the communication system and sometimes you wouldn't. And sometimes you'd just look up and see vapor trails and you knew it was time to get in the bunker. Toward the end of the war the Iraqis did direct a SCUD at us and we did not hear the alert on the flight line. All we saw were the vapor trails of the in-coming SCUD. Fortunately, the missile landed in the desert between where we worked and where we lived. But it was close enough. That created a degree of realism that told us we had to be alert at all times.

"As team chief, one of my responsibilities was to make sure each team member knew where the bunkers were. It was difficult sometimes, if you had an immediate threat, to be sure where everyone was. If you had someone who was taking a shower or in the latrine, you couldn't be sure they were OK. One of the things that goes through your mind as you feel the ultimate responsibility for your entire team is to make sure you don't lose anyone to something foolish. You need every one of them.

"ABDR is not just a 24-hour repair concept but rather a multi-faceted one whose objective is to generate multiple combat sorties. When we get a damaged aircraft, the assessor-and we had a good one, MSgt Allan W. Gaines-formulates the repair requirements and tells the technicians

how they will do it. He first looks at the trajectory of the object that hits the aircraft. It's called a UXO (unexploded ordnance) inspection and basically determines the entry and exit points of the projectile. It may travel through numerous systems that affect multiple operations. It is particularly troublesome to the electrical system-it can become buried in the wire bundles. And you don't know that it's there until something fails.

"After all the damage has been repaired the team chief reviews the work. Ordinarily, the engineer is the approving authority who says the aircraft is air worthy. In a crash damage area, however, either the -assessor or the team chief can also release the aircraft for flight. Captain Idle would still be the one to release an aircraft from the active inventory. Once an aircraft was so damaged that it was not economically feasible to repair it, he would formulate a statement and send it to the A-10 system program manager, basically saying 'Delete this aircraft. It's attrited due to the war.'

"We encountered three major types of damage on the A-10: the empennage area; all of the associated flight controls, rudders and elevators; and structural damage between the two engines and the aft fuselage. The enemy would wait until the aircraft had finished its pass, then fire as it turned away. Consequently, they found the point between the engines to be most vulnerable. They hit a lot of out hydraulic, electric and mechanical systems.

We had one aircraft that landed with a shelled engine in other words, the nose cone of the engine went through the engine casing. As with other cases, it was not immediately apparent what type of shell fire had made the nose cone come off.

That one required a complete engine change in addition to the usual nacelle repairs. We also had one F-16 that returned with significant battle damage. He had declared an emergency, but was unable to get his nose gear to come down. So he landed like that. We ended up assisting another CLSS ABDR team in disassembling that aircraft and shipping it back to a depot facility. It had over 25 hits.

"Equipment substitution is the key factor in making repairs. You would consult the engineer and ask if you could substitute material called for in the tech order with what was available. We used our ABDR kits as a backup to the ABDR kits provided by USAFE-the 'war wagons.' They were a life-saver. A crashed aircraft becomes your 'cannon ball' aircraft from which parts are cannibalized. It basically becomes your forward supply point to help service other aircraft. If you lose an aircraft, you take everything useable off of it to support other planes.

"We used A-10 SIN 79-181 like that, which had crashed at KKMC. The ABDR teams at King Fahd started to put A-10 SN 82-664 back together, but lacked numerous parts. They told us their requirements; so we took everything we could off 181, put it on a truck, and sent it to the MOB. We also used horizontal stabilizer bolts from aircraft 181 to repair A-10 SN 76-540, which had extensive damage, at FOL 1.

"I have to say that the pilots, in all instances where they had major damage, were still willing to

fly the aircraft if we said it was ready to go-holes or no holes. They were anxious to get back in the planes and fly. If we told them it was good, they took our word.

"We got everything at FOL 1, all different kinds of planes from all different countries-cargo planes, fighters. It if flew, it landed at our base. As an FOL you're a primary gas station and a primary reload area, and you have to be geared for that. We also fixed fuel lines on an Army truck; hydraulic lines on a K-loader, which carried freight onto a C-5; and front-end loaders for civil engineering, so they could continue operations on the runway. So, we stretch the ABDR concept as far as we can; it applies to "We had one aircraft that anything mechanical.

"Of course, the FOL is designed to house just a limited number of airplanes, while your MOB supports the entire wing. The difference between the two is that the FOL absolutely had no resources to speak of.

There was a taxi-way and a runway. If you had a crashed aircraft, you got it off the runway and waited for the next one to land. In contrast, the MOB had a much greater number of people, supplies, and aircraft.

"Even before we came back there was a feeling of pride in what we had done. When we got to Europe our reception in Germany was just overwhelming; and there was more to follow when we finally got home.

USAF Unit Histories
Created: 20 Sep 2021
Updated:

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