

183rd AIRLIFT SQUADRON



LINEAGE

183rd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (Night Photographic) extended Federal recognition, 1 Jul 1953

Redesignated 183rd Aeromedical Transport Squadron, 15 Nov 1957

Redesignated 183rd Air Transport Squadron, 1 Jul 1962

Redesignated 183rd Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jan 1966

Redesignated 183rd Tactical Airlift Squadron, 30 Jun 1972

Redesignated 183rd Military Airlift Squadron, 1 Jul 1986

Redesignated 183rd Airlift Squadron, 15 Mar 1992

STATIONS

Hawkins Field, Jackson, MS

Sullivan ANGB, Jackson, MS, 19 Jan 1963

ASSIGNMENTS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mission Aircraft

RB-26C, 1953

C-119F, 1957

C-121C, 1962

C-124C, 1967

C-130E, 1972

C-130H, 27 May 1980

C-141B, 12 Jul 1986

C-17A

Support Aircraft

C-47

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT SERIAL NUMBERS

C-124C			
52-1054	53-0009	53-0016	53-0023
53-0002	53-0011	53-0019	53-0025
53-0007	53-0015	53-0020	53-0034

ASSIGNED AIRCRAFT TAIL/BASE CODES

UNIT COLORS

COMMANDERS

Maj Thomas F. Brown, 1953
LTC George M. McWilliams, 1 Sep 1961
LTC Browne
LTC Charles Sullivan, Nov 1968
LTC Robert S. Finch
LTC John E Tabor, 4 Feb 1980

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

Approved 23 Jul 1959. The night owl design originated from a contest among unit members in 1953. Since we were the nation's only night photo-reconnaissance squadron, it was only appropriate that the approving letter noted, "The owl, known for his wisdom and habits of night activity, is representative of the highly skilled mission performed by squadron personnel."

This patch was to reflect the aeromedical transportation mission in 1959. The patch was strictly for the air evacuation unit, Jiminy Cricket was depicted with his arm in a sling, and Dumbo wore a hat emblazoned with a red cross. After the squadron's mission changed and evacuation became a secondary emphasis, the squadron dropped the patch. In 1996 the patch was restored. The unit had to get Walt Disney's permission to remove Jiminy Cricket's sling and Dumbo's hat. The negotiations took a while because Disney is protective of its copyrighted material.

After negotiating with the Walt Disney corporation for close to two years, the squadron was able to make a few alterations to the image and began wearing the patch that depicts Jiminy Cricket riding Dumbo. For years, the squadron had worn a slightly different version of the patch. When the squadron had been strictly an air evacuation unit, Jiminy Cricket was depicted with his arm in a sling, and Dumbo wore a hat emblazoned with a red cross. After the squadron's mission

changed and evacuation became a secondary emphasis, the squadron dropped the patch. A flying elephant is an appropriate mascot for the 183rd. Pilots in the unit fly the C-141 that lumber around the skies over Jackson International Airport. Hearon said the squadron had to get Walt Disney's permission to remove Jiminy Cricket's sling and Dumbo's hat. The negotiations took a while because Disney is protective of its copyrighted material. "And rightfully so," said Hearon. "They want to uphold the integrity of their material." The members of the 183rd were anxious to bring the patch to their squadron. Members from the unit had the patch on their uniforms minutes after they received them. Hearon said he's already had strange responses while walking through the airport, while he was wearing the Disney patch. A tourist back from Disney World thought Hearon, was also a tourist just back from Disney World with a really good souvenir on his shoulder.

MOTTO

NICKNAME

Wings of the Deep South

OPERATIONS

December 1953. The 183rd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (Night Photographic) of the Mississippi ANG performed its first state active duty when its C-47 administrative support aircraft was used to transport medical supplies, blankets and Red Cross personnel to the city of Vicksburg which had been devastated by a tornado. Other personnel went to Vicksburg to help provide traffic control and looting prevention. The squadron was on site for a week until city officials could resume control over the situation.

Federal Airport Use Panel held a public hearing Jackson, in October 1954 and ruled that neither civil nor military activities should plan to use jet aircraft at Hawkins Field because of its congested location and that no federal funds could be expended for expansion purposes. Oct 1954

The NGB advised the Adjutant General of Mississippi the modernization of the ANG would require that the 183rd to convert to jet aircraft. Aug 1955

On 16 Mar 1956 during a routine training flight; a/c departed local airport, nose gear failed to fully retract. Crew tried all emergency procedures, still unable to extend or retract the gear. Crew flew around Jackson area to burn fuel to lighten the aircraft. Pilot elected to land in the daylight instead of the impending darkness. Pilot brought the aircraft down on main gear and cut the mixture on both engines and held the nose up until the diminishing speed and lift required the pilot to let the nose settle to the runway. The resulting damage was classified as a major. The entire crew escaped from the damaged aircraft without injury.

Pilots began training on Republic RF-84Fs in anticipation of proposed conversion to jets. Conversion not implemented due to lack of facilities suitable for jet operations. Sep 1957

Last Rb-26 Sortie Flown by CC Major Thomas F. Brown and Lt Normer L. Gill, Jr., the first Air

Guard trained pilot. All pilots in the unit had received flight training as members of the Air Force or Army Corps 1 Dec 1957

The C-119 was the first conversion aircraft assigned to the 183d which in 1957 became the Aeromedical Transport Squadron (Light). Six Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcars replaced the RB-26. The C-119 widened the mission of the unit. By 1961 plans for a new airport were on the drawing board. The Government leased 64 acres of land in Rankin County to the City of Jackson for the new Air Guard complex. Construction of the present base began on 15 April 1961.

C-121

On 1 July 1962 the C-121 aircraft arrived in Mississippi. They were sleek, four-engine propeller driven aircraft. Saturday, 1 June 1963, marked the beginning of the unit's world mission with a flight to Germany in the C-121.

The Government leased 64 acres of land in Rankin County to the City of Jackson for the new Air Guard complex. Construction of the present base began on 15 April 1961. Lease was for \$1 a year for the land Northwest corner of airport. Construction began on 15 April 1961 with a programmed completion date of July 1962

Sortie to Germany– Sqn/CC LTC George M. McWilliams and Air Force advisor LTC Herbert F. Harris. Seven day mission from Jackson to Dover, Harmon AB, Newfoundland, Mildenhall, Rhein Main and returned through Lajes Kindley Bermuda, Dover and Jackson during the predawn hours on 7 Jun. 1 Jun 1963 C-121

Sortie–1 Connie crew of 16 for 8 day trip to Tokyo Japan; initial flight over the Pacific Ocean and longest flight in the history of MANG. Flight arrived at Tachikawa AB, near Tokyo on 10 May with 10k of cargo. Connie covered 15,033 miles with stops at Travis, Hickam, Wake, and Midway. For a total of 70 hours flying time. 8 May 1964

Jun 1967 Air Guard transport units were staying busy in the mid-60s flying missions in support of American forces in Vietnam. In June 1967 the 172d was singled out to fly the 1000th support mission into South Vietnam. 23 Jun, unit left Jackson; Kelly, Travis; Hickam; Kwajalein Guam, Mactan AB, Philippines; six days after departing from Jackson the unit arrived at Da Nang Vietnam and offloaded 20k of cargo. The mission resulted in almost 43k of cargo 22 military passengers to and from various enroute stops and covered 20,000 miles in 103 flying hours.

Hurricane Camille hurled its far-reaching impact from the Mississippi Gulf Coast to Jackson on 17 Aug 1969. Within hours after Camille struck, the C-124s were in the air headed for Gulfport ANG Training Site. The dramatic, suspense filled days following the hurricane saw the 172d's response to the emergency: the unit flew 20 missions into the area, evacuated 670 Gulf Coast citizens, including 264 hospital litter patients. The Globemasters, which hauled over 60,000 pounds of cargo into the disaster area, also transported other elements of the 172d to participate in relief operations. 9 AES missions, 11 Support missions for a total of 20 missions 671 pax/ 267 litter patients/13 ambulatory patients 38,876 patient miles flown 60,400 pounds of cargo.

Less than two months after the destruction visited by Hurricane Camille, the unit launched an

ambitious and unprecedented mission on 9 October 1969 with a maximum force airlift to Southeast Asia. The airlift included one mission a day for seven days to supply equipment and material for American troops in the war zone.

Sep 1974 Hurricane Fifi struck Honduras. Two of the unit's aircraft carried emergency supplies to the storm victims.

May 1975 3 aircraft and 85 members of the group participated in Solid Shield 75 a massive armed forces exercise that was conducted in NC and involved over 40k troops from all branches of the military.

18 Feb to 1 Apr 1978 the 172d participated in Operation Volant Oak, an Air Force-sponsored deployment to the Panama Canal Zone. Under Volant Oak, the cargo mission of the Air Force Southern Command would eventually be turned over to units from the Air National Guard and the USAF Reserve, on a rotating basis, relieving regular AF units assigned to Howard Air Force Base in the Canal Zone; 3 aircraft four aircrews and a total of 140 members of the unit many of them rotating to the Canal zone on regular two week annual training tours.

Thirty-three years of exemplary service paid off on 12 July 1986 when the first C-141B to be released from Air Force control arrived at Thompson Field to begin its new mission with the Mississippi Air National Guard. With a total of eight aircraft, the unit began a new mission in strategic airlift that greatly expanded its global range.

In March 1988 the 172d took part in the airlift of approximately 3200 troops and almost 1000 tons of cargo on an exercise to Palmerola Air Base, Honduras. The 172d had the distinction of being the only Air National Guard unit in the United States which participated in the airlift of troops to Honduras. On 6 December 1988 the Soviet Republic of Armenia suffered a powerful earthquake. The first Air Guard aircraft to fly to Armenia was a C-141B from the 172d. Before relief missions ended, the 172d would fly six missions with its planes and crew and additionally would furnish a crew to fly a U.S. Air Force C-141 whose crew had reached maximum flying hours.

The Soviet republic of Armenia suffered a powerful earthquake. The first aircraft to fly to Armenia was a C-141B from the 172nd. On 6 Dec 1988 the Soviet Republic of Armenia suffered a powerful earthquake. The first Air Guard aircraft to fly to Armenia was a C-141B from the 172d. Before relief missions ended, the 172d would fly six missions with its planes and crew and additionally would furnish a crew to fly a U.S. Air Force C-141 whose crew had reached maximum flying hours. 6 Dec 1988

On 6 Dec 1988 the Soviet Republic of Armenia suffered a powerful earthquake. The first Air Guard aircraft to fly to Armenia was a C-141B from the 172d. Before relief missions ended, the 172d would fly six missions with its planes and crew and additionally would furnish a crew to fly a U.S. Air Force C-141 whose crew had reached maximum flying hours.

11 December 1988. Starting on this date, Air Guardsmen flying C-141Bs from Mississippi's 172nd Military Airlift Group (MAG) and C-5As from New York's 105th MAG participated in an

airlift of clothing, food, and supplies to Armenia after a powerful earthquake devastated that region of the Soviet Union.

Sep 1989, a devastating hurricane struck the tiny island of St. Croix, leaving the island crippled, the 172d flew eleven emergency relief missions, hauling 465 tons of cargo and 472 passengers and encompassing 165 hours of flying time.

17 Dec 1989. The 172d flew 21 sorties in support of Operation Just Cause in Panama during the period 20 Dec 1989 to 12 Jan 1990. The total amount of cargo transported during the support of Operation Just Cause was 403.6 tons and the total number of passengers was 1,274.

The primary mission of the 172nd Military Airlift Group is to command the assigned airlift squadron and supporting units provided for the airlifting of troops, cargo, and military equipment, passengers, and mail to and from areas requiring such airlift; and to participate in operations involving the airland or airdrop of troops, equipment, and supplies when required. The secondary mission is to provide and maintain aeromedical evacuation of patients, employing medically qualified personnel.

The 172nd Airlift Group provided two aircraft and crews for Operation Provide Hope that operated out of Germany and Turkey for the duration of the effort. More than 4.5 million pounds of food and medicine was distributed to 24 locations in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In addition, the 172nd was the first aircraft into Sarajevo, Yugoslavia with humanitarian supplies.

On 15 January 1989, the 183 Military Airlift Squadron contributed once again to the relief effort for earthquake-stricken Soviet Armenia. Capt Don Dillman, aircraft commander and crew departed Jackson, Miss, and enroute to McGuire AFB, where over 60,000 pounds of relief supplies were loaded. After a refueling stop at Rhein Main AB, Germany, the crew flew on to the Soviet Union. Over the next four days the crew made three more trips between Incirlik AB, Turkey, and the Soviet Republic of Armenia, airlifting almost 250,000 pounds of disaster relief supplies to the Soviet people. The crew of 10 members (SSgt Greg Pagan, loadmaster; MSGT Rick McCraw, flight engineer; Capt Charlie Decker, pilot; Capt Don Dillman, aircraft commander; Lt Col Bill Lutz, pilot; CMSgt Jim Bishop, loadmaster; TSgt John Winfield, flight engineer; MSgt Earl Winterstein, loadmaster, TSgt Frank Bander, flight engineer; and MSgt Jim Pennington, loadmaster) felt this was one of the "most memorable" trips they had ever flown.

The Air Force Outstanding Unit Award was presented to the 172 Military Airlift Group of the Mississippi Air National Guard on 18 January 1989 for exceptional, meritorious service from 1 July 1986 through 30 June 1988. This marked the fourth time in the past ten years that the 172 had been presented this citation. The award was formally presented to Col Shellie M Bailey, Jr., group commander, by Maj. General Arthur J Farmer, the Adjutant General of Mississippi. The award recognizes the group's excellence in maintaining an outstanding level of performance while involved in a major aircraft conversion, twenty million dollars in construction projects and a 40 percent increase in manning requirements.

On 8 April 1989 the 183rd Military Airlift Squadron participated in its first mission to the

continent of Australia since the unit's transition to the C-141B. The crew picked up the California Army Guard Band at Los Alamos, Calif, for a goodwill tour to Hickman AFB, Hawaii; Richmond, Australia (near Sydney); and Port Moresby in Papua, New Guinea. The crew, commanded by Maj. Robbie Barron, returned to Jackson, Miss., on 18 April 1989.

On 14 May 1989 the 183 Military Airlift Squadron departed for an airlift mission in support of U.S. embassies in several South American countries, including Panama, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. Maj. Calvm Allen was the aircraft commander and his crew included: Lt Col Tommy Smithhart, 1st Lt Joe Brewer and 2nd Lt Steve Joy, pilots; TSgt Mike Nipper, MSgt Daryl Mobley and Sgt Junior Simmons, flight engineers; SSgt Lloyd Burton and Sgt Greg Lindsey, loadmasters. While in Panama the situation mere was described as tense by the crew. Security was very tight with troops massed about the air base.

In September 1989 a devastating hurricane (Hugo) struck the tiny island of St. Croix (in the U.S. Virgin Islands), leaving the island crippled, without electricity, water and with severe shortage of food and medical supplies. The 183 Military Airlift Squadron and the 172 Military Airlift Group provided humanitarian relief services from 27 September 1989 through 31 October 1989. Eleven emergency relief missions to St. Croix were made, hauling 465 tons, 472 passengers, and encompassing 165 hours of flying tune. There were a total of 75 crew members who participated for a total of 58 stories. Coordination of the missions was accomplished by MSgt Larry Herrington, Msgt Randy Robinson, Capt David Floyd, and Maj. Bob Matthews. The crews flying into St. Croix had to arrive in daylight hours due to lack of electricity. There were no navigational aids or radar. There was a makeshift tower reported utter chaos and massive destruction. The first crew arriving brought in an operating room and a complete medical staff. The following missions arrived with more medical supplies, food, water, clothing, building supplies, and a variety of necessities. The overall effectiveness and attitude of the missions was summarized by one crewmember who said, "It really felt good to be a part of such a worthwhile mission, knowing that your training has helped people in dire need of help during this stressful period."

Serving as a simulated foreign operations base, the 172 Military Airlift Group assumed that role of host on 5 November 1989 to 256 army troops from the 412 Army Engineer Command in Vicksburg, Miss. After convoying by bus to England AFB, Alexandria, La., the Army personnel were met by two C-141 s from the 172 Military Airlift Squadron and transported along with 140,000 pounds of cargo to Thompson Field. Upon arrival at Thompson Field, the 172 Aerial Port Flight offloaded the C-141s while the logistics Section served as the reception operations center.

On 19 December, 1989, Col Shellie M Bailey, Jr., commander of the 172 Military Airlift Group, was notified by the national Guard Bureau of a request by the Military Airlift Command that the 172 Military Airlift Group's participation was needed in "Operation Just Cause," the name given to operations being conducted in Panama. The 172 Military Airlift Group was able to respond within 12 hours of initial request. During the period 20 December 1989 to 12 January 1990, the 172 Military Airlift Group flew 21 stories in support of "Operation Just Cause." The first aircraft left Jackson, Miss. At 9:20 a.m. on 20 December 1989 and arrived at Pope AFB, N.C. at 10:40 a.m. the same day. After loading 24 combat troops and 31, 288 pounds of cargo, the aircraft

departed Pope AFB at 1:20 p.m. and arrived at Howard AFB, Panama, at 6:20 p.m. on 20 December 1989. This was the first C-141 aircraft to land at Howard AFB since the beginning of the invasion, according to Lt Col Harold A. Cross, commander of the 183 Military Airlift Squadron and aircraft commander on the first sortie to Panama. The C-141 departed Howard AFB at 10:30 p.m. on 20 December 1989, flew to Mac Dill AFB, Tampa, Fla., and returned to Jackson, Miss., at 5:05 p.m. on 21 December 1989. Colonel Cross said that of the six C-141 aircraft available at the beginning of the missions to Panama (two of the eight aircraft assigned to the 172 Military Airlift Group are routinely out of service for scheduled maintenance), five departed on 20 December 1989 in support of the operation: he said that one of the six aircraft was found to have a crack in a wing and was therefore unavailable. Lt Col Bill Lutz, squadron operations officer of the 183rd Military Airlift Squadron served as aircraft commander on three of the sorties. He said that the first one, which flew to Travis AFB on 22 December 1989 for on loading of 104 troops and 1,000 pounds of cargo, encountered a delay which developed for refueling at Kelly AFB, Tex., when seven hours was required for refueling, compared to a normal period of perhaps two hours. He said the delay was due to Kelly AFB being unprepared for the refueling, in terms of support personnel and support activities. Virtually all crew members of the 183 Military Airlift participated in these missions. "It was a total group effort to accomplish this operation," stated Maj. Bob Matthews, a member of the squadron, who added, "we've been training for this type of emergency for many years and this was an opportunity for us to show the results of this training.

The 183 Military Squadron performed a mission from 24-28 April 1990 in support of a group of paratroop jumpers (PJs) stationed in Woodbridge, England, who supported NASA as emergency rescue teams for the space shuttle. The crew, comprised of Lt Col Rob Cox, Maj. Tony Cain and 2nd Lt Robert Maloney as pilots; SMSgt Jim Ed Wade, Msgt Hank Woolsey, SSgt Will Meely and SrA Todd Welch, as engineers; Msgt Larry Harrington and TSgt Alan Dorris, as loadmasters; and a maintenance crew which included TSgt Glenn Smith, TSgt Alan Patterson and SSgt Morris Driver, left Jackson, Miss., in route to Hamilton Bay, Bermuda. From Bermuda, they flew for seven and one-half hours to RAF Woodridge, England, transporting the PJs and their equipment home after 14 days of training in Bermuda.

A crew of 12 members of the 183rd Military Airlift Squadron was tasked with the responsibility for transporting equipment and support personnel for Bob Hope's USO Road to the Berlin Wall and Moscow Tour. There were two C-141s involved in the mission; one was from the 183 and the other one was from McGuire AFB, N.J., with a crew from Charleston, S.C. The 183 crew left Thompson Field in Jackson, Miss., on 30 April 1990, and flew to Norton AFB, Calif., to pick up the equipment and crew for the tour. A stop was made in Goose Bay, Canada for fuel, and then they were on their way to their first tour stop, Tempelhof AB, Berlin, Germany. The 183 crew members helped unload the equipment which would be used for the outdoor performance at the Berlin Wall. They worked alongside members of the USO tour group, including Bob and Dolores Hope, Latoya Jackson, Brooke Shields, Rosemary Clooney, Miss Universe, and Yakov Smirnoff. While in Berlin, several members of the crew had the opportunity to visit East Berlin; several members of the crew had the opportunity to visit East Berlin, going through Checkpoint Charlie. After several days at Tempelhof, the 183 crew departed for their next tour stop, RAF Mildenhall, England. After the performance at Mildenhall, the 183 crew remained in England while the Charleston crew took the cast to Moscow for a performance. From Mildenhall the 183

crew joined the Moscow group at Rhein Main AB, Frankfurt, Germany, and the last stop on the tour. The 183 crew returned to Jackson on 12 May 1990.

On 8 July 1990, the 172 Military Airlift Group (MAG) sent an aircraft with crew from Jackson, Miss., on a strategic around-the-world airlift exercise. The mission was regularly-scheduled mission by the Military Airlift Command (MAC) to resupply U.S. Navy bases around the world. The 172 MAG requested MAC to allow them to participate in the mission and permission was granted. The maiden flight, a first for any guard unit, flew to Norfolk, Va., where it picked up a load of cargo and refueled before continuing its long journey across the Atlantic Ocean to Torrejon, Spain, where it off-loaded the cargo and picked up additional cargo. From Spain the C-141 navigated eastward to Sigonella, Italy, where it exchanged cargo and continued on to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia. After a brief stop in Bahrain for refueling, exchange of cargo, and crew rest, the crew turned its course south towards a tiny island in the Indian Ocean, the island of Diego Garcia. Approximately 50 passengers were boarded at Diego Garcia in addition to an exchange of cargo. It was between Diego Garcia and their next stop at Clark AB in the Philippines that the mission reached its halfway mark. At Clark AB the passengers disembarked and a new load of cargo was accepted with a destination of Andersen AFB, Guam. Once in Guam the crew was well on their way home. Next stop was Hickman AFB, Hawaii, where the crew would enjoy a couple of days of crew rest and pick up their final load of cargo destined for statewide delivery at Travis AFB, Calif. After a brief stop at Travis to offload the cargo from Hawaii, the C-141 and crew made their way home to Thompson Field in Jackson, arriving there on 17 July 1990. Members of the crew on the nine-day mission included: CMSgt Charlie Watson, Lt Col Normer L Gill, Col Shellie M Bailey, Jr. (aircraft commander), Lt Col Stanley D Papizan (pilot), SMSgt Jim E Wade, SSgt Jeffrey W McFall, CMSgt James M Bishop, Jr., MSgt James S Pennington, MSgt Volmer Griffin, and TSgt Howard Doty. Also accompanying the crew was MSgt Bob Mason, who served as the official photographer and documented the trip.

The 183 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) was activated by President George Bush on 7 August 1990. The action came after massive Iraqi forces invaded the tiny emirate of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, and began setting up positions near the Saudi Arabian border. The 183 MAS was deployed as a part of Operation Desert Shield to help move personnel and more than one billion pounds of military hardware to Saudi Arabia. Gen Hansford T Johnson, commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, described it as "the largest sustained airlift ever over a short period of times." Nearly all of the Air Force's C-141 long-range cargo aircraft were involved. In early August, as the operation was getting underway, a C-141 from the 183 MAS was the first of the giant cargo jets to land in Saudi Arabia. The 183 MAS is the only Air Guard unit to operate the C-141B and the first ANG unit in the nation called to active duty. By the time President Bush activated the unit, many of its more than 150 members had already volunteered for the desert operation. Air force chief of Staff Gen Michael J Dugan said in a personal message of thanks, "To the men and women of the 183rd Military Airlift Squadron; on August 7, the nation called you to action. You reacted swiftly, responding on a grand scale to support our friends in the Middle East. Base Mobility, Security Police, Mission Support, Operations and Maintenance troops are now executing the Air Force mission exactly as they were trained to do it. Our nation's success is the direct result of your personal commitment, buoyed by the sacrifices of your loved ones and the solidarity of an anxious world.

The 183 Military Airlift Squadron, officially activated by President Bush on 24 August 1990 to participate in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, was officially inactivated on 1 May 1991. Approximately 50 percent of the members volunteered to remain on active duty and continue to fly missions for various periods up to the statutory limit of one year.

An informal joint public and Air Guard effort was conducted on 8-9 September 1990, to provide a taste of home for members of the 183 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) currently serving in various locations worldwide. Operation Cookie Lift, conceived by Lt Col Dwight Sisk, commander of the 183 MAS, and coordinated by the 172 Aerial Port Flight (APF), invited family, friends, and members of the community to provide cookies, baked goods, and other food items and reading material to show support for the Mississippi guardsmen serving on active duty as a result of the Persian Gulf crisis. Capt Gerald McNeer, transportation officer with the 172 APF, called the initiative, "An excellent way for everyone to be involved in supporting our people dispersed worldwide."

Operation Cookie Lift, according to Captain McNeer, started as a couple of boxes of comfort items from some of the aircrews of the 183 Military Airlift Squadron and snowballed into some 180,000 pounds of cookies and humanitarian supplies being provided to troops in Saudi Arabia. He said that community participation was outstanding and climaxed with an all-out effort by the Telephone Pioneers of America. He added that the bulk of the operation was the nearly 150 letters of thanks sent back to individuals and to the unit by servicemen and women in the Desert Shield/Storm operation who had received these items...the 172 APF will long be remembered by strangers and friends alike as the guys who go the cookies to them.

As the crisis in the Persian Gulf moved into its third month, members of the 172 Military Airlift Group made their presence known in ways and in places that far exceeded their numbers. In the period ending 6 September 1990, the 148-member 183 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) recorded a six fold increase in its flying hours, staging out of several European bases into the Arabian peninsula. During that period the flying squadron amassed over 2,500 hours in the air compared to a normal cumulative total of 4,600 flying hours for an entire year. Transporting "anything and everything they give us." Lt Col Bill Lutz, commander of the 183, described the squadron's cargo mission as a "beans and bullets" operation ferrying troops and equipment in the global Desert Shield Operation. On one mission during September the squadron delivered over 46,000 pounds of mail to deployed personnel. It has also served as the primary carrier for "Operation Cookie Lift," which provides donated items from home, including cookies, gum, candy, toiletries and reading material. Six of the eight C-141B aircraft have been operationally active during Desert Shield while the Jackson base has converted to an around-the-clock work schedule in order to support a steady stream of C-141s from units Air Force-wide. Serving as a staging depot for "Operation Cookie Lift," the 172 Aerial Port Flight (APF) has moved a total of 8,500 pounds of the support supplies to Mississippi Guardsmen deployed in the Middle East during Desert Shield. APF has 21 members active in the operation, from Rhein Main AB, Germany to Dover AFB in Delaware to Pope AFB, N.C. Also operating out of Germany are 18 members of the 183 Aeromedical Evacuation Flight (AEF). The "Air Evac" members, who volunteered for the 30-day tours, are "back filling" vacancies in medical evacuation flights from Rhein Main AB, Germany to Andrews AFB, MD. During the 10 to 11 hour flights the Air Evac personnel care for 75-100 patients suffering from a range of ailments from broken bones to

appendicitis. One patient was suffering from injuries received from falling off a camel. The 183 Air Evac members also assisted in transporting and caring for survivors of a C-5 crash in early September. Each Air Evac crew consists of two flight nurses and three medical technicians who dispense medication, take vital signs, and provide customary medical care. With C-141B Star lifters from the entire U.S. Air Force (regular and reserve) inventory arriving into and departing from Thompson Field around the clock, Lt Col Sam Hazel, commander of the 172 Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (CAMS), reports that "all of the feedback we have received has confirmed that our people are the best the Air Force has to offer." The CAMS personnel have been tasked with "turning or servicing aircraft which included post and pre-flight inspections and repairs. Colonel Hazel's squadron has recorded roughly a one-third increase in operations due to activity generated by Operation Desert Shield.

During October 1990, the 183 Military Airlift Squadron (MAS) continued to fly support missions into the Persian Gulf area. Flying over 1,000 hours, the squadron transported manpower, materials, and munitions. The 172 Aerial Port Flight processed 28,000 pounds of supplies in a continuing support of Operation Cookie Lift. Aerial Port Flight continues to have 21 members deployed as part of Operation Desert Storm. Members of the 183 Aeromedical Evacuation Flight continue their mission of backfilling vacancies in the Rhein-Main AB, Germany-to-Andrews AFB, Md. Medical evacuation transports.

For the fifth time in 12 years the 172 Military Airlift Group (MAG) has been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award. The award is presented every two years to units distinguished by exceptionally meritorious service. During the period from July 1988 to June 1990 the 172 MAG successfully passed its first operational readiness inspection and unit effectiveness inspection since conversion to the C-141 aircraft. Also during this period the 172 MAG participated in Operation Just Cause and in several humanitarian efforts. Representing Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus, Brig Gen Charlie D Brackeen, Special Advisor for Military Affairs, commented during a presentation ceremony at Thompson Field on Saturday, 1 December (1990), "the 172nd has a history of successfully meeting challenges and completing jobs with excellence and dignity." In a letter accompanying the award, Gen Brackeen added, "Each member can be proud of this recognition of their individual contributions in attaining this prestigious award." Maj. Gen Phillip G Killey, Director, Air National Guard in Washington, D.C., further lauded the members of the 172 MAG for "their selection for this prestigious award (which) reflects great credit upon themselves, the state of Mississippi, the Air National Guard and the United States Air Force.

The 183 Military Airlift Squadron participated in a humanitarian mission during the week of 20-27 January 1992 when it transported some 90 Ukrainian children and their escorts from Portland Air Base, Oregon, on the west coast to John F Kennedy International Airport in New York, on the east coast, to meet their connecting flight home to Kiev, Ukraine. The children, with their escorts had been flown to the United States to undergo medical tests to try and determine the long-term effects of exposure to radiation as a result of the Chernobyl accident. A special request for the transportation of the children made by Oregon Sen. Mark Hartfield was approved by Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, and the 183 Military Airlift Squadron was able to have an aircraft on the west coast for training exercises. In commenting on the mission, Lt Col Bob Matthews, air operations officer for the squadron, said, "We have about 360 hours each month that we're assigned so we can conduct flight training missions around the U.S. and the world. It

doesn't matter if we're conducting training and flying empty or if we're training and doing some good for someone else at the same time, we're still completing our mission requirements and at no extra cost to the taxpayer. All flight training is part of maintaining our combat readiness."

Two C-141s with full flight crews from the 172 Military Airlift Group were recently dispatched to Frankfurt, Germany, to be involved in the massive airlift (Operation Provide Hope) to remote countries of the new Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union). One of the aircraft, commanded by Maj. Buster Swinney landed in Moldova, with 28,660 pounds of medicines, surgical gloves, sutures, dressings, blood recipient sets, blankets, patient pajamas, and slippers. Nearly 100 Moldovan officials and local news media were on hand when the aircraft landed at Kinshev after the nearly-three hour flight from Rhein-Main AB in Frankfurt, Germany. One resident of the city who was at the airport said, through a U.S. Information Agency interpreter, "it's difficult here. We think the very best of America. We have the very best impression." The supplies were unloaded from the aircraft in about one hour and filled nine trucks. The other 172 Military Airlift Group crew, led by Lt Col Tom Clayton said, "it's really not enough to make a big difference but it establishes the fact that the American and freedom loving people all over the world are supporting the Russians and all the other people of the Commonwealth in their struggle and hardships during the changeover."

The 183rd Airlift Squadron and the 183rd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron have been tasked by Military Airlift Command with a monthly live aero medical evacuation mission, Capt Fred Nelson noted that these missions had been handled exclusively by the active duty units and the Air Force Reserve. He said the Col Harold Cross, 172 Military Airlift group Commander, when announcing the mission assignment, attributed accomplishment of the two units during Desert Shield Desert Storm. Captain Nelson said that the air evacuation unit and the airlift squadron both were activated and flew missions in and out of Saudi Arabia, and that the air evacuation unit augmented the 2 Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron in Germany on a voluntary basis for six months prior to activation. Captain Nelson said that the first scheduled mission was to carry cargo to Saudi Arabia and then carry patients to Germany and back to the United States; it was scheduled for June for six days, and additional missions were planned for July, August, and September.

Air Evacuation and flight crews from the 172 Airlift Group flew a CNN reporter to the United States from Rhein-Main AB, Germany. The reporter had been injured by a sniper and had undergone emergency surgery in Sarajevo for a bullet wound to the jaw prior to being transported to Germany by a C-130. "It was our mission, our crew, and our aircraft," Capt Janet Sessums, a flight nurse on the mission, said. The 172 Airlift Group had recently been flying live air evacuation missions from Saudi Arabia to Rhein-Main and back to Andrews AFB, Md. Capt Sessums noted that even with the participation of the 172 in the Gulf War that this was the first opportunity for the flight crew, medical crew and the aircraft to be from Mississippi. In addition to the wounded reporter, there were approximately 39 other wounded patients on the flight, of which four were children. Other members of the 172 Airlift Group who participated in the flight were: Lt Col Mary Lockhart (medical crew director); TSgt David Easterling; SMSgt Cecil Watson; Capt Robert Maloney; MSgt Rodney Winstead (charge medical technician); MSgt Hank Woolsey; Maj. Buster Swinney (aircraft commander); TSgt Rhonda Lovorn (2nd medical technician); 1st Lt Louis Waller; A1C Teri Milner (3rd medical technician); and MSgt Jim

Pennington.

The 172 Airlift Group has received its sixth award of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; this award was for the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1992. The citation accompanying the award, which is presented every two years to units distinguished by exceptionally meritorious service, stated that during the period covered by the award that the group was an active and highly successful participant in the Desert Shield/Storm conflict. Personnel from six of the 12 units that make up the 172 Airlift Group were activated. The remaining technicians and traditional guardsmen provided 24-hour support from August 1990 to May 1991, enabling the 172 to serve as the only C-141 Reserve Forces staging base. During this maximum effort airlift, although not tasked for the air refueling mission, the 172 Airlift Group became air refueling qualified to extend wartime capabilities. The attainment of 36 years and over 160,000 mishap free flying hours demonstrates both the pride in performance and skill of the aircrews and maintenance people of this unit. The distinctive accomplishments of the members of the 172 Airlift Group reflect great credit upon themselves, the United States Air Force and the Mississippi Air National Guard."

The 172 Airlift Group volunteered one C-141 and two aircrews on 3 December 1992 to participate in Operation Restore Hope, the relief effort to Somalia. The aircraft and crew flew to the west coast where they were to await their mission to transport troops and supplies to Somalia. The 172 was to rotate air crews every 15 days on a volunteer basis.

Members of the 172 Airlift Group participated in training deployments to Ramstein Air Base, Germany in June and July 1993, and also in Central America in June 1993. The first group which deployed to Germany, of 102 members, departed Jackson on 5 June and returned on 19 June 1993. The second group, of 84 members, departed Jackson on 19 June and returned 3 July 1993. Capt Roger Rowland, public affairs officer for the 172 Airlift Group, participated in Operation Provide Promise, which was providing relief to war-torn Bosnia. On 30 June 1993, Captain Rowland departed Rhein-Main AB, Germany, on a C-130 aircraft on a relief mission for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The aircraft was on the ground for 16 minutes in Sarajevo and then departed for Zagreb, where wheat and rice was picked up for transportation back to Sarajevo.

The 172 Airlift Group assisted the 20th Special Forces Group in a joint exercise of the Army Guard and Army Reserve in August 1993, while the special force group was performing annual training supporting an active duty mission in Central America. Four hundred tons of cargo, 10 vehicles, and over 200 passengers were airlifted during the period 8 August, from Thompson Field in Jackson, using three C-5, two C-141, and one commercial L-1011; the group was scheduled to return to Jackson 28-30 August.



Air Force Order of Battle
Created: 5 Oct 2010
Updated:

Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
The Institute of Heraldry. U.S. Army. Fort Belvoir, VA.
Air Force News. Air Force Public Affairs Agency.