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Aviation Depot Maintenance Roundout Unit (ADMUR)

Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom

Task Force Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD)

Locations: Arifijan, Kuwait, Balad, Iraq, Bagram, Afghanistan Sini, Egypt

20 July 2006 thru 7 October 2007

Abstract

The Task Force Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (TF-AVCRAD) deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom from 20 July 2006 thru 7 October 2007 and was located in Arifjan, Kuwait, Balad, Iraq, Bagram, Afghanistan, and Sini, Egypt to provide limited depot level maintenance and back-up field level maintenance as required to support Army Aviation, Special Operations Aviation, and selected Joint and Coalition rotary wing forces during major combat operations to shorten the logistics tail and increase the Combatant Commander's Aircraft operational availability .

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Personnel Background and Military Experience

I'm a 51 year old Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Sergeant Major with the 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade stationed in Frankfort, Kentucky. I have 23 year of federal active service with the Kentucky Army National Guard. I currently hold 6 different MOS's and have performed in numerous technical and leadership position leading up to this deployment. The following is a chronological list of my military training and experience.

October 2007-Present. I'm the S3 Operations Sergeant Major for the 63D Theater Aviation Brigade. Responsible for overall aviation operations and training for the Brigade Headquarters Company and 6 subordinate companies totaling 952 Soldiers.

July 2006-October 2007. I was assigned as the S3 Operations Sergeant Major for the Task Force Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot in Arifjan, Kuwait and Balad, Iraq. Responsible for conducting mission analysis and provide mission planning, execution, and support for the Task Force classification and repair mission in support of the Global war on Terrorism. Support operations include the tracking of 252 personnel and 50 pieces equipment through out SWA. Also responsible for the development of training plans and providing training resources in preparation for future missions.

October 2003-July 2006. I was assigned as the First Sergeant for the 63D Aviation Group. Responsible for the planning, conducting, evaluating and assessing of all unit training and to advise the Commander on the health and welfare of 120 Soldiers of the Command.

July 1997 – October 2003. I was assigned as the Platoon Sergeant for the S3/S2 and ADA platoons for the 63D Aviation Group. Provided tactical and technical expertise to subordinates and superiors concerning TOC operations. Planned, coordinated, and supervised activities

pertaining to organization, training, and combat operations. Responsible for supervising the successful accomplishment of the commander's mobilization readiness objectives.

April 1987 – July 1997. I was assigned as a crew chief and technical inspector for an UH-60 Blackhawk air assault Company. Performed various types of aircraft maintenance, inspections, repairs, and refuels. Performed aircrew member duties. Operated aerial M-60 machine gun.

Unit/organization background.

The 63rd Theater Aviation Brigade provides Command, Control, Staff Planning, and Supervision of Theater Aviation Brigade Operations in support of United States Army North. The 63rd also provides Military Support to Civil Authorities to the Citizens of the Commonwealth Kentucky and Aviation Support to the Governor's Counterdrug Task Force.

Operation and Operational situation leading up to event.

The 63rd was preparing to mobilize and deploy for annual training with ARNORTH to conduct Aviation C2 TOC Operations and to complete the remaining Warrior Tasks in order to achieve deployable status. Are training emphasis was refining TOC capability through MDMP, TOC Exercises and TOC drills based upon and evaluated by ARTEP and TACSOP standards, resulting in the culmination of various National Level Exercises and/or annual training with USARNORTH.

Detailed description of your experience of the event.

TF AVCRAD was officially formed on 11 July 2006. Our 225 Soldiers come primarily from Army National Guard units in sixteen states including Maryland, Kentucky, California,

Connecticut, Missouri, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Iowa, Tennessee, New York, Hawaii, Ohio, North Carolina and Georgia.

TF AVCRAD executed the Theater Aviation Maintenance Program (TAMP) mission that includes: 1) providing National Maintenance Program (NMP) repair management capability to OIF/OEF; 2) conducting Supply Support Activity (SSA) operations; 3) providing limited Depot level maintenance support to OIF/OEF; and 4) on order, providing Aviation Intermediate Maintenance (AVIM) maintenance support to aviation units located in Kuwait and performing Air Port/Sea Port (APOD/SPOD) operations.

In early 2007 TF AVCRAD assumed responsibility for the mission of the Theater Aviation Single Manager (TASM), a organization responsible for responding to non-standard problems and providing solutions in the aviation field, to form the TAMP. With this important merger, TF AVCRAD became the single organization in theater to provide aviation maintenance and logistics support to the deployed Combat Aviation Brigades (CAB).

TF AVCRAD completed 6,561 separate work orders, an increase of 11% from the previous rotation. TF AVCRAD components repair shops produced 1,494 aviation components under NMP with a serviceable credit value of \$124.3 million. These repaired aviation components were then stocked in our SSA. Repair and Return (R&R) work in direct support of aviation units was also an important part of the workload.

The SSA completed over 478,660 supply transactions and processed 657 Aircraft on Ground (AOG) requests, an average of over two per day. AOG and other high priority parts were shipped north daily via C-23s and received in Balad in about one day. Handheld technology was also implemented in the SSA to improve accuracy and accountability. An accuracy rate of 98% was achieved during routine SSA inventories.

In early November 2006 TF AVCRAD Fix Forward teams were sent to Balad, Iraq and Bagram, Afghanistan to provide direct Depot and AVIM support to the Combat Aviation Brigades in theater. TF AVCRAD's robust forward presence resulted in over 30,349.5 man hours of direct support to units, an increase of 41% from the previous rotation. A significant amount of the support at Bagram was significant sheet metal repairs. Supported units include the 36th CAB, 25th CAB, 1st ACB, 3rd CAB, 12th CAB, 10th CAB and 82nd CAB.

APOD/SPOD operations resulted in 691 helicopters being processed for incoming and outgoing units. SPOD operations accounted for 534 helicopters and APOD operations in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan accounted for 157 helicopters. These numbers also include responding to the reinforcement action that occurred in early 2007 when additional manpower and equipment, including the 3rd CAB, was directed to Iraq.

The management of retrograde took on added importance during our rotation. TF AVCRAD processed over 33,312 aviation retrograde components, an increase of 43% from the previous rotation. Over 19,163 retrograde components with an unserviceable credit value of \$456.5 million were shipped to sources of repair in the U.S. and around the world. An additional 2,425 retrograde components with an unserviceable credit value of \$39.2 million were self-recovered at the retrograde yards at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. TF AVCRAD was also tasked with an entirely new retrograde mission – missile components – and recovered over 385 retrograde components with an unserviceable value of over \$9.2 million. Additionally, 16 damaged ECOD aircraft were processed for return to the United States.

TF AVCRAD Soldiers assisted AMC-SWA (Fwd) on number of important missions. The mission included installing armor and other modifications on 314 Stryker vehicles; supervising

the processing of battle damaged HMMWVs to the United States for reset; installing FRAG 5 armor kits on approximately 250 HMMWVs; providing drivers and other support personnel for distinguished visitors and Soldiers and civilian personnel; and providing support personnel for convoys moving new production HMMWVs from the SPOD to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Additionally, TF AVCRAD Soldiers were also in a variety of other missions. Six of our Soldiers traveled to the Sinai to assist the 1st Aviation Support Battalion (ASB), Multinational Force and Observers with aircraft maintenance and logistics issues. Three of our Soldiers worked at Udairi Army Airfield at Camp Buehring in Kuwait to coordinate the installation and removal of desert modifications to Army helicopters on deployment and redeployment. Finally, two of our Soldiers flew combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan with units of the 36th CAB and 82nd CAB.

The 225 Soldiers of TF AVCRAD are proud of the role they played in the war fight. Their work helped insure that Army helicopters were always flying and ready for the next mission. “Semper Volans”, Latin for “Always Flying”, is the motto of TF AVCRAD.

Lessons Learned

The current ADMRU TAMP has no inherent air/ground transport to provide transport requirements. LSA could not always provide required support during initial phases of OIF.

The TAMP requires significant real estate (170,500 sq ft). Planners need to identify footprint/real-estate requirements and reserve the area in advance.

The TAMP has no inherent force protection/security. Soldiers providing security are the same needed to pull maintenance on aircraft.

Deployment Time – Planners must consider and allow sufficient time for establishment of TAMP. Time from alert to deployment into theater may exceed 30 days for personnel and longer for TAMP equipment package.

This organization is dependant on a sustainment unit of action (SUA) Brigade for the preponderance of logistics support including CL I -V, and IX (ground) replenishment support; administrative, legal, and medical support.

The AVCRAD is dependant on the pre-positioned TEP or APS for tactical wheeled vehicle support. It is not organically comprised with personnel trained in tactical wheeled maintenance. It does not have organic ground vehicles or aircraft to perform the intra-theater distribution of aviation spares to multifunctional aviation brigades. Is not resourced to perform the Class IX distribution mission. It does not have required organic aircraft required to perform aerial recovery of crash or battle damaged aircraft and no inherent self-defense or force protection capability.

The AVCRAD placed Depot support forward into Iraq & Afghanistan reducing response and AOG average wait time. A mission analysis found it could take 7-10 days to move a depot contact team to Iraq. A depot cell was established with tools, technical, supply, and C2 support, capable of immediately responding to customer requirements.

This forward cell provided customers technical, production, and supply support, forward and served as the eyes forward for AMC-SWA. Supply and technical inspectors performed a classification mission to insure only components that could be repaired by the AVCRAD were moved to Kuwait. These unserviceables were returned quickly by air to the wholesale system mitigating soldier's exposure to IEDs. Tracking and accountability of AOG parts needed drastic improvement, effectively parts issued from the SSA in Kuwait lost visibility. The AVCRAD developed a web based tracking mechanism and established a MCT team in Kuwait, and Iraq, reducing customer wait time from an average of 8 days to 36 – 60 hours. The AVCRAD effectively refined the maintenance process by focusing repair capability primarily on critical

components in high usage by SWA units. Additionally, the AVCRAD accomplished the first combined Air and Sea Joint Service redeployment from Afghanistan to CONUS

References

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Russo, Arnold LTC (2007) *Task Force AVCRAD After Action Reports*.